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most loyal of friends

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PREFACE

THE present volume is not a mere collection of disconnected articles, of *disjecta membra*, on the Russian Empire and on the Russian people. Rather is it an attempt to give a systematic and co-ordinated survey of Russian history and policy.

In the first part I have tried to analyse somewhat more consistently than has been done by previous authors how Russian history and Russian policy are rooted in definite geographical conditions.

In the second part I have tried to indicate the inappreciable debt which the world owes to the Russian people.

In the third part I have shown how the ideals of Russian culture have found adequate expression in the representative masters of Russian literature.

In the fourth part I have dealt with the two burning questions of Russian politics, the Polish problem and the Jewish problem.

In the paper on the abortive Revolution-

ary Movement of 1905 I have examined the difficulties which confronted Russian reformers. The paper was written ten years ago in Moscow under the direct impression of the tragic events of the Russian Annus Mirabilis. I have analysed the causes why the civil war of 1905 failed and was bound to fail, and I have suggested on what lines any future reforming movement is likely to succeed. I have not hesitated to reprint those pages, not only because I was repeatedly urged to do so by the late Count Tolstoy, not only because my forecasts were verified in every detail, but because those pages are still entirely applicable to the present situation. The difficulties which confronted the Russian Revolutionists in 1905, will still confront Russian Reformers in the political reorganization of to-morrow. The remedies which were demanded in 1905 are still urgently required to-day.

I am quite aware that within the narrow compass of 200 pages I have only been able to touch the fringe of a huge subject, but I shall have sufficiently attained my purpose if I have succeeded in stimulating some of my readers to think for themselves on those fascinating topics, and if I have succeeded in removing some

of the most glaring British misconceptions of a wonderful people whose fortunes are henceforth closely bound up with our own, and who are destined after this war to be the dominant influence in World Politics.

THE HERMITAGE, JEDBURGH
November, 1915

PART I

The Geographical Foundations of Russian Politics


VEGETATION ZONES
Industrial Districts
ARCTIC OCEAN
TUNDRA
TUNDRA
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FOREST
White
Archangel
Dwina
FOREST
Helsingfors
Gulf of Finland
Reval
Narva
ST. PETERSBURG
Vologda
Kostroma
Viatka
Perm
BALTIC
Riga
Pskov
AGRICULTURE
Tver
Vladimir
MOSCOW
Nijni Novgorod
Kazan
Vilna
Smolensk
Kaluga
Tula
Warsaw
Lodz
FOREST
BLACK EARTH
Volga
Samara
Saratov
Ural
Kiev
Kharkov
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
Dniepr
Nikolaiev
Odessa
Kherson
DON
ARID
DESERT
Astrakhan
Volga
Danube
Sebastopole
BLACK SEA
FOREST
CASPIAN SEA
Poti
Batum
Tiflis
FOREST
Baku
English Miles
0
200
400
"Bartholomew, Edin"



CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

I

RUSSIA is not a country, but a continent, extending for thousands of miles in one uninterrupted expanse (except for the break of the Ural Mountains) from Central Europe to the Far East, and from the ice-bound wastes of the White Sea to the sub-tropical shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Russia is not a nation, but a bewildering conglomerate of nations, speaking every language—Polish, Finnish, Roumanian, Swedish, German—professing every form of religion—Pagan, Buddhist, Mahometan, Greek Ortho-

dox, Roman Catholic—with every degree of civilization, from the nomadic semi-savage tribes of the *Steppes* to the progressive Finns, with their Parliament of women and their universal popular education.

II

THE first and most important fact to remember about the Russians is that they are, with the Chinese, the most prolific people of the earth. Add the aggregate population of Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and Norway, and you will not reach the hundred and seventy-five teeming millions of the Russian Empire. And that population, notwithstanding an awful death-rate, notwithstanding plague and famine, increases automatically *by three millions a year*. Every year three-quarters of the entire population of Scotland are being added to Russia. In twenty-five years Russia will number two hundred and fifty millions! When we consider that those two hundred and fifty millions will by that time be fully equipped with every instrument of modern civilization, we realize that Russia will be one of the most formidable world-forces, for good or evil, before the first

half of this century has run its course. We realize that the future belongs, not to England, or to France, or to Germany, but to Russia. After generations of suffering, the Slav is at last coming into his inheritance.

III

The vast plains of Russia, the most extensive in the planet, include three parallel zones—in the north the forest zone, in the centre the agricultural zone—with the "black earth" of wondrous fertility—and in the south the waving prairie inhabited by the Cossacks. If we add to those three zones the vineyards of the Crimea and of the Caucasus, we find that the soil of Russia produces every form of agricultural wealth. And the mineral resources of the country are no less varied and no less inexhaustible. We need only refer to the coal-fields of the Donetz, to the oil-fields of Baku, to the gold and silver mines of the Ural Mountains and of Siberia. If to-day Russia is one of the granaries of the world, to-morrow she will also be one of the greatest industrial areas.

For the transport of her agricultural and industrial produce Russia possesses not only sixty

thousand miles of railroad, but what is vastly more important—the most magnificent waterways of Europe. The Russian complains that he has no outlet on the ocean, that all his seas are inland lakes: the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Caspian, and Lake Baikal. But he forgets that he possesses the Don, the Dnieper, and the most glorious river of the world—the Volga! Let the tourist take his passage at Tver, where the river becomes navigable, on one of the floating hotels of the Kavkaz and Mercur Steamship Company—Tver is only eight hours' railway journey from Petrograd—and let him drift in an eight days' journey on the "Mother Volga" down to the Caspian Sea, and he will then conceive the unrivalled possibilities of Russian inland commerce.

IV

It is true that a large proportion of the Russian Empire has not yet been assimilated. The alien races—the Catholic Poles, even the Germans and Finns, the Jews and Armenians—have not yet been won over by the conqueror. Still, the Russian element forms the enormous majority of the population. When the Government gives up its stupid methods of com-

pulsion, when its alliance with the great liberal Powers of the West will be spiritual as well as political, it is probable that the process of Russification will proceed at a very rapid pace. For let us not be deceived by superficial appearances. The Russian race possess many of the characteristics of a superior and imperial people. They have survived a struggle for life of ruthless severity. They have resisted the continued pressure of hunger, war, plague, of a cruel climate, and a more cruel Government. The Russians have got a splendid physique, they have a capacity of endurance which is surpassed by no other race. And although they emerged only yesterday from barbarism, they have already produced giants in every department of Art, of Literature, and Philosophy—scientists like Mendeleieff, philosophers like Soloviov, musicians like Tschaikowsky, painters like Verestchagin, men of letters like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

V

EUROPEAN Russia is surrounded by an industrial belt in the west, in the south, and in the east. But in the meantime Russia remains pre-eminently a nation of peasants. The

moujik is still the backbone of the Empire. He is a splendid worker when he is given a chance, and in Siberia and Central Asia he proves an ideal colonist. It is true that technically he is still a bad agriculturist. He is ignorant. He has no capital. He scratches the earth with his primitive plough, as in the days of Abraham. But enormous progress is being made, and great changes are impending. The Russian Government is instituting gigantic experiments in land reform, which our own land reformers would do well to follow very closely. Hitherto the communal system of property seems to have proved an insurmountable obstacle to agricultural progress. That form of collective primitive agriculture has now broken down. The ancient institution of the "mir," or village community, is being disintegrated. Communism is giving way to peasant proprietorship and social co-operation.

VI

But it is obvious that no reform of any kind will be carried through successfully until the methods of government in Russia have undergone drastic changes. Those hundred and seventy millions are still badly ruled. In the

first place, they are misgoverned by their spiritual rulers. The Greek Orthodox Church, with her parish priests, or white clergy—who are compelled to marry—with her hierarchy of monks and bishops, or black clergy—who are forbidden to marry—remains grossly ignorant and slothful, and maintains the people in sloth and ignorance. She is out of touch with modern life, and continues in abject mental submission to a despotic State.

Nor do the Russian people fare much better with their temporal rulers. The Tsar is the nominal head of the Empire. But the reality of power is vested in an irresponsible bureaucracy, corrupt by tradition, and what is worse, corrupt by necessity, because they are badly paid, because despotism must needs breed corruption, and because the huge distances from St. Petersburg make supervision and responsibility impossible. The immortal comedy of Gogol, "The Inspector-General," denouncing the abuses of the provincial bureaucracy, remains partly true to this day. No doubt since the heroic rising of 1905 the Russian people have received representative institutions; but the Duma is only a beginning. No reforms can be fruitful unless they are attended by a

large measure of Home Rule in Finland, in Poland, in Trans-Caucasia, in Little Russia, and unless they are attended by an even larger measure of local self-government, and last, not least, unless they are attended by a concession of religious liberty—which has ever been the foundation of political liberty. The main condition of any future progress in Russia is that the Edict of Toleration of 1905 shall cease to be a dead letter.

VII

UNFORTUNATELY for the prospects of reform the ideals and the activity of the Government were still being diverted before the war, by the menace of the German Peril and the fascination of the Far East, from the pressing home-problems. What the Russian people really want are better roads, more railways, better housing, better sanitation, better schools, a more liberal Church, a more liberal administration. But instead of the activities of the Government being turned in that direction, the huge revenue of the Empire had to be largely spent on increasing an already huge and unwieldy army, and the political energies of the ruling classes were being devoted to the ambitious and peril-

ous schemes of conquest in Persia, Mongolia, and Manchuria. Only ten years ago the jingo policy brought humiliating disaster to the Russian arms. The Government quickly forgot the awful lesson, and soon returned to the evil of its ways. They were "strangling" Persia. They were preparing to annex Mongolia and part of Manchuria. There lay the danger in the immediate future. The pressing necessities of national defence, a crushing military expenditure, a false and obsolete political philosophy, the imperialism of the governing class and the spirtual despotism of the Orthodox Church, those were before the war the great obstacles in the way of the moral and intellectual enfranchisement of the Russian people.

VIII

We have every reason to hope that those obstacles will be finally removed on the conclusion of peace, and that the war will prove a war of liberation for the victorious Russian people as it will prove a war of liberation even for the vanquished Germans. For this war is pre-eminently not a dynastic war or a war of conquest, it is a national and a democratic war. And it is almost a law of Russian history that a

national and democratic war has ever acted as a revolutionary force in Russian politics.

(1) The liberal era of Speranski, perhaps the most picturesque and the most mysterious personality in Russian annals, followed the national war against Napoleon.

(2) The liberation of the serfs and the epoch-making reform of Alexander II followed the Crimean War.

(3) Drastic reforms had been decided upon after the Russian-Turkish War of 1878, and would have been granted but for the insensate murder of the Liberator Tsar.

(4) The establishment of Parliamentary Government followed the Russo-Japanese War.

The present war will prove no exception. The victory of the Allies will mean the end of militarism and the end of militarism will for the first time release the greater part of the huge financial resources of the Russian Empire for the economic development of the country and for the education of the people. And the victory of the Allies will also mean the end of the baneful activities of German reaction and of the German bureaucrats of the Baltic provinces, activities which, as we shall prove in a subsequent chapter, have been the incubus

of Russian history. It is inevitable that the Russian Government, closely identified as it is with the great liberal Powers of the West, France and Great Britain, must come under their political and moral influence. We may, therefore, confidently predict that British and French culture will blend with and permeate Russian culture, and will be the leaven of Russian politics for the next generation.

CHAPTER II

THE LESSON OF PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY *

I

RUSSIA is the classic land for geographers. Nowhere else have geographical conditions left a more indelible imprint. Nowhere else have men felt more deeply the all-pervading influences of physical surroundings, of climate and of race. There are some countries, like England, where man has conquered Nature, where Nature has become the benevolent and ministering servant of man. There are other countries, like Russia, where it is Nature that always threatens to enslave man. In few other countries have men been compelled to submit to that physical des-

* I do not in the least pretend to give in the present chapter an "explanation" of Modern Russia. I only desire to single out one particular factor which I think of the highest importance. Whilst not underrating the other factors, and least of all the religious factor, I think it desirable to draw attention to and to emphasize one essential element in the complex Russian problem which is being constantly ignored.

potism with a more passive resignation, the resignation of a Tolstoy so representative of the race. And in no other country has Nature given the lie more cruelly and more emphatically to the noble dreams of idealists. Idealists may dream their dreams, proclaim their systems, and claim their reforms. But the great natural, economic, climatic forces in Russia continue to follow their immovable course, heedless of systems and reforms. It would seem as if the political destiny of Russia had been written not in the book of philosophy, but in the stern and sibylline book of Nature; it has followed the bend of rivers and the curves of isothermic lines; and one guesses its mystery, and one catches its meaning more surely and more easily, by listening to the murmur of forest and steppe than by listening to the most plausible theories of revolutionists.

II

In this connexion, and to illustrate my meaning from the outset, and to indicate what I am driving at, I would like to point out the utter futility and folly of most newspaper comments and discussions on the political situation in Russia. In speculating on the probable course

of Russian policy, journalists are constantly reasoning on the childish assumption that the ultimate success or failure of political and social reform must entirely depend on the will, weak or strong, just or wicked, enlightened or obscured, of some one man or group of men, the Tsar or the Grand Dukes, their supporters or opponents. If Russia could only be got rid of these Grand Dukes, and "of a few corrupt officials," then all would be right. Not only do they forget that behind the Tsar and the Grand Dukes, and the high court officials, there is the large army of the bureaucracy, millions strong, with their immense power, with their vested interests, who are capable of paralyzing and neutralizing all the efforts of the most enlightened rulers, and of wrecking all the programmes of reform if they so choose, but they also forget that behind both autocracy and bureaucracy there is a factor infinitely more important still, and that is the passive resistance or active co-operation of one hundred and fifty millions of peasants, whom we totally ignore in our calculations, as if they were absolutely of no account. Unfortunately for our speculations and calculations, these one hundred and fifty millions, whether active or pas-

sive, *must* be taken into account, as the ultimate success of any scheme of reform necessarily depends upon them. It may not be true that the people have generally the Government they deserve, and that they deserve the Government they have; or to use the language of Carlyle, that the rights of a people are equivalent to its mights, its needs and aspirations. But in a country like Russia, the needs and the mights of the people cannot be ignored, and those needs and mights are largely determined by the conditions under which they live, and those conditions largely resolve themselves into facts of climate and distance, of soil and of race.

III

One single illustration applicable to the present situation will explain better than any argument the interdependence between climate, economics and politics. All reformers are agreed that the most urgent need of the Russian people, after the introduction of religious freedom, is the establishment of universal popular education. So vital is that need, so strongly is it felt that, as far back as the sixties, Tolstoy for several years relinquished his literary activities

and improvised himself a primary schoolmaster. But Tolstoi was driven by his pedagogical experiment to see the futility of all the theories and reforms propounded by doctrinaire publicists. The doctrinaire publicists imagine that universal compulsory education could be introduced into Russia by a stroke of the autocratic pen, and they blame a reactionary bureaucracy and an obscurantist church for keeping the people in darkness. But the bureaucracy is really much less responsible than theorists imagine for the backwardness of Russian education. In a country where winter lasts for seven months, where for those interminable winter months the plains are covered with a thick shroud of snow, where roads are few and bad, in a country which is further sparsely inhabited and where the *izbas* of the *moujik* are as scattered as the farms of the Dutchmen on the South African veld—you cannot possibly have primary schools as in Great Britain or France. Even the most progressive Russian Government could not afford a schoolmaster for every twelve families. It could not even establish itinerant schoolmasters as is done in the Scottish Highlands. For the Highlands are much better provided with roads, and they are more thickly inhabited than many

parts of Russia. On the other hand you cannot compel little Russian children to tramp in the depth of winter for ten miles to the nearest school centre. In other words the diffusion of popular education is not mainly a question of political development, but of economic development. Again it is largely a question of climate, of good roads and of density of population.

Let us then constantly keep in mind those physical conditions which are amongst the fundamental factors of the political problem. It would be as idle to ignore those geographical factors as it would be to ignore the intellectual and spiritual factors. Without an accurate and minute investigation of the environment, it is as futile to speculate on the relative strength of the forces of liberty and reaction as it would be to speculate on the resistance of the Forth Bridge or the Tay Bridge, without examining the strength of the foundations, without studying the special properties of iron and steel as well as the general laws of dynamics.

IV

THE first feature and the essential fact in the physical geography of Russia is the infinite

plain, the uniform steppe and prairie, without any other undulations than the tumuli, or prehistoric tombs, or the high banks of streams, or the insignificant hills which separate the basins of the enormous, slow, aimless rivers. The chain of the Ural Mountains which separates Asiatic Russia from European Russia hardly breaks the continuity of the plain. The slopes of the Ural are a passage rather than a barrier, and between the last slopes of the Ural and the Caspian Sea there opens a gate of three hundred miles in width which has always been the highway of invaders and marauders.

And this unity of the infinite plain is still rendered more striking through the unity of climate. In summer the same Continental climate reigns all over the Empire, the same intense heat relaxes and enervates the inhabitants of Lake Ladoga in the north and the inhabitants of the Caspian shores in the south. In winter the same shroud of snow buries the whole Russian Continent from Poland to Siberia. The Sea of Azov and the northern Caspian Sea are frozen as well as the Gulf of Finland. And the traveller might drive and glide in his sledge in a straight line for six

thousand miles from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, from Archangel to Astrakhan.

V

Now, my point is that this single feature of the physical geography of Russia has determined beforehand the whole history of the Russian people. We are reminded of the admirable sonnet of Wordsworth on the subjugation of Switzerland by Napoleon:

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice;
In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty.

If it be true that the voices of *sea* and *mountain* are the two mighty voices of Liberty, on the other it is even more obvious that the *plain* has ever been the arena and refuge of *despotism*. The levelling of the soil seems to be significant and symbolical of the levelling of men. Ernest Renan has told us that the desert is monotheistic, *i.e.* that the uniformity of the desert suggests and determines a belief in the unity of God. In the same way, one might assert that the plain is monarchic and autocratic. In

all times and everywhere the plain has invited the invader, and in order to repel and expel that foreign invader the inhabitants have had to submit to the protecting yoke of a master; they have had to accept a military and centralized monarchy.

Examine on the map the few and scattered historic cities of Russia—Moscow, Novgorod the Great, Nijni Novgorod, Kiev, Kazan—generally situated on the border of the sheltering forest, or at the mouth or on the banks of rivers. The new city or "nov gorod" is generally situated on the lower bank (nijni), but the old city is almost invariably situated on a height, round a Kreml. Each one of those old cities dominating the plain appears to us like a sentinel who watches and like a stronghold which protects, and that Kremlin—which is both an acropolis and a capitol, which is at once a fortress, a church, and a city—tells us by its aspect of the violent destinies of the inhabitants. The whole of Russian history is one continued effort to drive out foreign invasion. In everlasting succession on each frontier arises a new enemy—Tatars of Kazan and of Crimea, Khirgiz of the Volga, Cossacks of the Steppe, Turks, Poles, Lithuanians, Ger-

mans, Swedes, towards the south and the west —the external peril has never ceased.

VI

SPEAKING of the European coalition against France in 1792, Joseph de Maistre has been able to say that France could only be saved by a Reign of Terror. With how much more reason might one affirm that Russia could only be saved by an autocracy? It is Ivan the Terrible, Peter and Catherine the Great who have been the cruel and stern master-builders of the Russian people, the "gatherers" of the Russian soil.*

It is hard for a Briton, who has an instinctive worship and almost a superstition for liberty, to get reconciled with the principle of despotism. It is difficult for him not to see in that principle something diabolical, the source of all moral and political evil. And most difficult of all, most repugnant to his feelings, is it to admit that this abhorred autocracy can ever have been the very condition of the salvation of the country. But let us not forget that in the life of nations the principle of authority, as long as it is accepted by the people, and as

* See the Russian writings of Danilevski.

long as it rests on a moral or spiritual basis, may be as necessary and therefore as legitimate as the principle of liberty. Let us not forget that even in our own history two of the most decisive epochs have been the military dictatorship of Cromwell and the civil dictatorship of Pitt. Let us not forget that the Romans—*i.e.* the nation who, of all ancient nations, have been the most successful in the practice of freedom and of self-government, did never hesitate to appeal to such dictatorship whenever the country was in danger. *Salus populi suprema lex.*

VII

Now in Russia for centuries the country has always been in danger. Hannibal has always been at the gates of Rome. Tatars and Poles have always threatened the gates of Moscow. And therefore fatally despotism had to be perpetual. *Dura lex sed lex:* it was a great evil, but a necessary one.

Let us suppose for one moment that the Russians had adopted another form of government, and had remained loyal to the republican principle which we see prevailing in the most ancient commonwealths of Pskof, Viatka, and My

Lord Novgorod the Great. What would have happened if Russia, instead of submitting to the iron hand of the Grand Dukes of Moscow, had risen against them, and if republican freedom had triumphed?

The reply to that question is written in the whole history of Poland which is inseparable from that of Russia. In the life and death struggle between the two great Slav nations, the Poles seemed to have every advantage: they were a race admirably gifted, brilliant, clever, proud, and bold. They lived in close proximity of the centres of civilization, in communion of sympathy and interest with Western Europe. They were inspired with a passionate love for independence. And yet it was Tartarized and barbarized Russia that triumphed, it was civilized Poland which was crushed and blotted from the very map of Europe. Poland perished through freedom, through the abuse of the *liberum veto* of the elective principle. She perished because, in the supreme hour of danger, the Poles did not rally around their leaders, because they did not make to their Government the sacrifice of their anarchist instincts. Russia, on the contrary, made that sacrifice; she trusted to the sword

of her princes; she allowed herself to be saved by despotism. "Let Poland perish rather than surrender the privileges of a free aristocracy of the Schlachta!" seems to have been the guiding principle of the Poles. "The safety of the country is the supreme law" remained the motto of the Muscovites.

VIII

Let us, therefore, take care not to simplify unduly the tragedy of humanity by rigid adherence to a few doctrinaire principles. By all means let us proclaim that in our modern industrial community, liberty with all its risks is infinitely preferable to despotism with all its security. But do not let us forget the fatality of the past. Let us remember that autocracy is not a mere baneful accident in the annals of Russia, a system born of brutal force and which must perish by brutal force, a despotism only supported by exile and by Cossacks, and only tempered by Nihilism and by assassination. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, although nations may not necessarily have the Government they deserve, and deserve the government they have, yet when a government has succeeded in lasting for generations, it thereby

clearly shows that it must be adapted to the needs of and in conformity with the aspirations of the inhabitants. Now autocracy in Russia has endured for centuries; it has survived every revolution. Individual Tsars have been suppressed, Peter III, Paul I, Alexander II, have been murdered. The institution itself could not be suppressed. In times of national disturbance and national distress it has always appeared to the people, rightly or wrongly, as the supreme refuge. It has owed its existence not to chance, but to necessity. And this necessity seems so obvious, so imperative to every Russian who knows his history, that all Slavophiles, even though their tendencies were liberal, as in the case of Aksakov and Yourii Samarine, have upheld the autocracy, the "Samoderjavie," as the corner-stone of the political structure.*

* In the course of an interview with Tolstoy, the Russian prophet repeatedly emphasized to me the importance of studying the "Slavophile" theories, in order to understand the present situation in Russia.

CHAPTER III

THE LESSONS OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

SUCH are the teachings of physical geography. Let us consider what are the lessons of economic geography.

I

LEAVING aside the frozen marshes of the extreme north only inhabited by the Laplander and the reindeer, and the salt deserts of the extreme south only crossed by the nomadic tribes and the camel, European Russia is divided into three zones or regions (*see* map facing page three): the region of primeval forests in the north, the region of the grassy steppes or prairies in the south, and the intermediate region of arable land, that famous "black soil" of inexhaustible fertility, which it is only necessary to scratch for the harvest to burst out as by enchantment. Although those three regions are clearly characterized and distinct, they are

nevertheless mutually interdependent. The dwellers of the forest need the produce of the black soil—the granary of Russia. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the agricultural plain need the fuel and the building materials of the forest. Coal and stone are generally wanting. All Russian houses in the country are built in wood, and it has been calculated that all the Russian villages are destroyed by fire every twenty years.

And still more does the plain need the moisture of the forest, without which the droughts and famines which at present are only a periodical scourge of Russia would be her permanent curse. And, finally, the grassy steppe or prairie is the "hinterland" of the black soil. Not only does the arable land encroach every year on the steppe, but without the possession of that "hinterland" the inhabitants of the plain, as in the legendary days of the Cossacks, would have been always at the mercy of incursions and invasions.

Owing to those three zones Russia is a huge agricultural community, distinct from industrial and commercial Europe; it is an Eastern Europe of wheat and wood distinct from the Western Europe of iron and stone. The peas-

antry constitute 80 to 85 per cent. of the total population.

No doubt in the last generation the existence of prodigious mineral wealth has been revealed in the centre, in Poland, in the Donetz, in the Ural. The industrial exploitation of these regions has begun and very rapidly developed, partly through the enterprise of Belgian engineers. But for ages to come the industrial production of Russia will scarcely meet the demand of the home market. Russia will continue to buy from the foreigner *and will remain an agricultural nation*, and one of the granaries of the world.

II

Now in all countries and in all times an agricultural, non-industrial, non-commercial nation is essentially conservative, almost blindly respectful of all traditions and all authorities. Its political progress is much slower, even though it may be safer. But in Russia the peasantry are incomparably more conservative than anywhere else. In the first place they are more religious, or, in the opinion of doctrinaires, more superstitious. For centuries they have identified themselves with the cause of the

Greek Orthodox Church. In the Russian language the same word means peasant and Christian: *krestianine*. For centuries the Russian peasant has in turn repelled the Mohammedan invasion of Tartars, the Catholic invasion of Poles, the Protestant invasion of Teutons, the freethinking invasion of Jews. To the Russian peasant, and mainly owing to the geographical position of the country, nationality and religion are synonymous terms. Religious unity has been the foundation of political unity. The Pravoslavie, or orthodoxy, has become the second principle in the Slavophile Trinity, and even the liberals who reject a State Church believe in a National Church.

But, in addition to this religious cause of the conservatism of the peasantry, all physical conditions seem to neutralize and check political movements. Nature herself seems to conspire against political conspirators and seems to defeat their schemes: climate, the enormous distances and the difficulties of communication, the absence of roads, the scarcity of cities, explained by the absence of a middle class—which is itself explained by the primitive conditions of trade and industry—all these causes are in the way of political agitation.

III

To understand the radical differences of the conditions of life in Britain and in Russia, compare a British village with a Russian village. The British village appears to us as a highly differentiated political organism with its hierarchy of classes, its division of social labour: at the summit a small aristocratic community of landed proprietors presided over by the lord of the manor or the local magnate; an intermediate middle class of farmers and tradespeople led by the clergyman and the schoolmaster; at the base a democracy of artizans and farm labourers: from the highest to the lowest rung of the social ladder, an intense political and religious life, which is favoured by the close proximity of the town, the continuous interchange between town and country, the rivalry of sects, the grouping of parties, the establishment of clubs and societies for the enlightenment and diversion of the inhabitants.

Now practically none of these conditions exist in the Russian village. There is no ruling class. Estates are too scattered, too wide apart to render social relations possible. The landowner, if he is rich, will spend his income

in the Russian capital or in European health or pleasure resorts; for life is so dreary, solitude is so oppressive, winters are so long that nothing except a high sense of duty could induce the magnate to reside. If he is poor, and compelled to remain on his estate, he will vegetate in the most lamentable intellectual isolation. The clergy are demoralized by their bureaucratic subjection, by their ignorance and poverty, and have very little moral influence over the peasants. There is no middle class, for either trade does not exist or is in the hands of the Jews and the Germans. The peasantry, absolutely abandoned to themselves, are without any contact with civilization. Isolated from the city, riveted to the soil, nearly all illiterate, the din and turmoil of life only reaches them as a distant murmur. I do not mean to say that these peasants are by any means dead to political life. On the contrary, the Russians have a much healthier political and democratic instinct than the Germans, they possess a very active local government, and that local government, represented by the "Mir," or village community, and the "Zemstyo," or County Council, may even be said to be by far the most original and interesting of Russian institutions.

But the activities of the "Mir" and of the "Zemstvo" are above all of an economic and administrative order. They do not extend beyond the border of the village. They do not free the peasant from his intellectual isolation.

IV

To imagine that those one hundred and twenty millions of Russian peasants, thus riveted to the soil, thus living under the pressure of poverty, in ignorance and isolation, should be mature for revolutionary utopias, seems to me to be the wildest of dreams. However prodigiously fertile the Russian soil may be, and however gifted the Russian people, political discipline does not grow in a day like the grass of the steppe, it is not a plant without roots in the past, in the traditions and the manners of the people. No doubt the peasantry may be got to rise in some bloody "jacquerie." They might be drawn into some agrarian revolution—like the Pougatchef revolt in the eighteenth century—which would satisfy their craving for possessing and extending the soil they cultivate. But the hunger for land once satisfied, the peasantry would again become conservative, like the French peasant proprietor

after the French Revolution, and so far from joining any mere "intellectual" revolution, they would dread such a revolution as a possible reaction and as a menace to their newly acquired rights.

V

No doubt the political awakening of the rural masses is coming. Popular instruction is spreading. Proprietors will be induced more and more to reside on their estates. Religious freedom and the threefold struggle against Catholicism, Nonconformity, and rationalism will compel the Orthodox clergy to emerge from their ignorance and their subjection. The priests will receive a better education and thereby acquire a moral authority which will enable them in turn to educate their flocks, hitherto so sadly neglected. And, above all, with the progress of trade and industry there will arise a middle class, and with the middle class a strong and independent opinion, which is the prime condition of all political liberty. But even when these great changes are accomplished, when a ruling class and an independent class are constituted, the rural masses and their leaders, the clergy will continue to respect the

established authorities. For generations to come the peasantry and the clergy will continue to see in the Emperor and in the Church their spiritual and temporal Providence, a patriarchal and beneficent despotism. In one word, Political Reform in Russia shall be *conservative*, or will be a failure.

CHAPTER IV

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RACES

WE have seen so far that physical geography and economic geography are both on the side of tradition and conservatism. What can we learn further from the geographical distribution of races?

I

WE have already emphasized the fact that for ten centuries Russia has been a debatable land, a *terra nullius*, open to all barbarians and to all nomads. For ten centuries these barbarian hordes have swept like torrents over the plain. But ever on the fertile steppe the green grass would grow again after the horse of Attila had passed. The forty-eight races which are scattered all over the empire represent the alluvial strata of these barbaric invasions. The ethnographical map of Russia tells us of the migrations and revolutions of races, even as the

geological map tells us the revolutions of the crust of the earth. Tchoudes and Tchouvachs, Tatars and Tcheremissans, Kalmouks and Khirgiz, Finns and Samoyedes, Georgians and Lesghians, Persians and Armenians, Jews and Roumanians, Germans and Swedes, Poles and Lithuanians, Great Russians, White Russians, Little Russians—each unit of this Babel of nations is a living witness of a tragic past.

II

At first sight the geographical distribution of races seems to contradict the political lessons of physical and economic geography. Physical and economic geography proclaim the unity of the Russian Empire and the historical necessity of a strong central government. Ethnography, on the contrary, seems to proclaim the infinite diversity of the Tsar's dominions and the necessity of autonomy. It seems as if so many heterogeneous races could not possibly live under one power and one law.

But let us observe that these races are not only different, but irreconcilably *hostile*. And the instinctive hostilities of race are complicated by differences of language, of religion, and of habits. To compel all those races

whom the vicissitudes of history have thrown together on the same territory to live in peace, we again must have an energetic, military, centralized government, which shall play the part of umpire and peacemaker, and which may refrain and repress spontaneous anarchy and civil war which are always ready to burst out. To all these people the Russian Empire has brought the same supreme benefit as the Roman Empire: *Pax Romana*, the Peace of the Tsar.

III

THEREIN precisely consists the civilizing part which Russia has played for centuries. Recent events, the anti-Semitic pogroms, the massacres of Jitomir and Odessa, the Beiliss trial, so far from contradicting this truth, only confirm it. As soon as, in consequence of the external disasters and the internal agitations, the Russian Government began to lose its authority, together with its prestige, as soon as it had to recall its regiments and to send them to the Far East, at once the destructive forces reigned supreme, and religious passions, racial hatreds, got free play. The Baltic peasants murdered the German barons, the Poles murdered the Russian officials, the Russian peasants mur-

dered the Jews, the Tatar insurrectionists, as I saw myself in Tiflis, murdered the Armenians. I know full well that these massacres have been attributed to the Government itself, which wanted to create a diversion, carrying out the old device: *Divide ut imperes.* The massacres have been imputed to agents of the secret police, to the famous "black gang" or "tchornia sotnia." But I must frankly confess that I would rather believe in the most absurd legends of the Middle Ages, in the ritual murders, in the crimes of witches, than believe in the monstrous folly of a Government which would have organized those very riots and disorders which it was its vital interest to suppress. No doubt subordinate agents may have taken advantage of the prevailing anarchy to achieve their wicked ends; but they only obeyed their own evil instincts, not any order of the Government. How could the Government have organized massacres, when it had practically ceased to exist? And let it not be said that such a design would be worthy of a "diabolical" Russian Government! For such a policy would not even deserve to be called "diabolical," it would be simply idiotic and imbecile, because any disorder would ultimately

turn against the Government itself. And not even the Evil One has ever been accused of stupidity.

IV

No, in truth, the explanation is less monstrous. The lamentable recent events are simply the outbreak of what Taine has called "spontaneous anarchy," or the spontaneous generation of anarchy. It is the primitive instinct of race antagonism, fostered by pestilential German theories, the barbarous passions of the mob, which, hitherto dormant and latent, hitherto repressed by the iron hand of Government, suddenly burst out and swept everything before them as soon as that obstacle disappeared. If autocracy or a strong military power did not exist in Russia the massacres of Jitomir and of Odessa would alone suffice to demonstrate the necessity of its existence in the interests of humanity and civilization.

And thus we again have to revert to the same political conclusion: the ethnography of Russia teaches us exactly the same lessons as physical and economic geography—the vital necessity of a strong government. It shows the danger, not to say the impossibility, of the

principal article of the revolutionary programme—an absolute parliamentary *régime* on the most approved British pattern. The remedy might be worse than the disease; it most probably would kill the patient. A centralized Parliament in which twenty nationalities would be represented by twenty irreconcilable parties would deliver Russia to legal anarchy. And legalized anarchy has ever been the very worst of all forms of government.

CHAPTER V

THE GEOGRAPHICAL ORIENTATION OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLITICS

I

IF there is one eternal and universal instinct in human nature, it is the irresistible impulse which attracts the inhabitants of northern countries to the sunny climes of the South and the East. It is the *heliotropic* instinct which directs the flower towards heat and light. It is the instinct to which Goethe has given immortal expression in the "Song of Mignon." It is the instinct which for ages has transformed Italy, the land of beauty, into a land of servitude. It is the instinct which has directed the colonial expansion of Great Britain, and which in our own day has been drawing Germany to the East.

II

WITH no other nation has this "Drang nach Süden" and this "Drang nach Osten" been so natural and so intense as with the Russian

people. For no other nation has been so disinherited by Nature, no nation has been so entirely bereft of heat and light. In the empire of the Tsar there are only two regions which are not subjected to the dominion of winter, the Crimea and Transcaucasia. Hence the value and prestige which for every Muscovite attach to those "Diamonds of the Crown." Hence the great part which these southern provinces have played in the Russian poets and novelists, in Pushkin's "Caucasian Prisoner," in Lermontov's "A Hero of our Time," * in Tolstoy's "Cossacks." The Crimea and Transcaucasia are to a Russian what Switzerland and the Riviera, what Italy and Greece, are to an Englishman or a Teuton.

Geography itself therefore seems to be in Russia the accomplice of that "Drang nach Osten" and that "Drang nach Süden" in which we in the West have only seen a spirit of aggression. It is a most significant and far-reaching fact that the three great rivers of Russia, the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga, all flow eastwards and southwards. As these three rivers are the vital arteries of Russia, as they are the

* This has just been added to Alfred A. Knopf's series of translations from the Russian.

three great routes of migration and invasion, the three highways of commerce, as they have determined the direction of the whole history of the Russian people—we may say that Russia, in "orientating" her foreign policy southwards and eastwards, has not only obeyed an instinct common to all that lives and breathes, but has merely followed the trend of her enormous rivers, carrying slowly but surely the destinies of those Northern Barbarians towards the Sunny South.

III

But in addition to the *heliotropic* instinct characteristic of all Northern peoples, in addition to the "oriental" trend of the great rivers, there is still another potent impulse which has given its direction to Russian history, and which an Englishman ought to be the last to ignore, and that is the desire to possess a free outlet to the sea—the sea which, so far from separating nations, binds them together, the sea which will bring Russia nearer to the cradle of religion and civilization, which will transform the agricultural Russia into a commercial and industrial Russia, which will bring trade and wealth, freedom and power.

Remember the famous page where the Greek historian describes the solemn and blessed moment when, after long months of expectation and suffering, the Ten Thousand Companions of Xenophon finally perceived the sea, the supreme object of their desires. *Θάλασσα! Thalassa!* the cry which two thousand years ago burst from the breast of the Greeks, has also been the sacred cry of the Russians! *Thalassa!* This cry sums up their whole history. For Russian history in modern times is nothing but an endless "Expedition of the Ten Thousand," a long effort to reach the "*open Sea.*" *Thalassa!* expresses both the past and the future of the people; all the realities which they covet and all the ideal things which they dream of.

IV

For the aspirations of religion combine to strengthen and to sanctify the blind desires of political instinct; for the "Drang nach Osten" will not only bring material wealth, the contact with civilization; it also means the realization of the religious destiny of Russia. The protectorate over Turkey and Asia Minor

will be the enfranchisement of the Slav nations of the Balkans, of the Orthodox brethren weighed down by the cruel yoke of the Turk, and it will involve the protectorate over Byzantium and Jerusalem, the two holy cities of the "Pravoslavs."

The Oriental and Asiatic policy of Russia is, therefore, not a policy of adventure and conquests. It is a natural and national policy. From the Russian point of view it is a perfectly legitimate and indeed a necessary one. The will of Peter the Great, whether it be authentic or not, corresponds to a political reality; it is the sacred inheritance and the historic mission which Russians for the last three centuries have transmitted from generation to generation. The struggle for the possession of Constantinople, "Tsargrad," both the capital of the Cross and of the Crescent, is the only one which has always rallied all the subjects of the Tsar, all political opinions, and all political aspirations. The conservatives, the Church, and the peasantry desire this policy because it must ensure the triumph of Orthodoxy. Liberals and "Occidentals" and intellectuals desire it because it will compel Russia to emerge from her isola-

tion, and must bring her nearer to the centres of civilization. Realists and Jingoists desire it because it must bring with it wealth and empire!

V

All these desires and all these dreams suffered a terrible check ten years ago through the disasters in the Far East. Therein mainly resides the pathetic interest of the Russo-Japanese War. Therein also lies largely the explanation of the internal convulsions which followed. For generations Russia had been advancing slowly but surely towards the ultimate goal of what she considers her "historic mission." Like a weary traveller, exhausted by a long march, and who, arriving near the end, wanting to make one supreme effort to hasten on the desirable consummation—falls down prostrate, in view of the promised land—even so the Russians, on the eve of achieving their dreams, after patiently waiting for centuries, were suddenly seized with a feverish impatience and tried to precipitate events. They failed, and they paid for their impatience with the temporary ruin of their hopes, with unheard-of disasters and with a tragic revolution.

PART II

What the World Owes to Russia

CHAPTER VI

RUSSIAN *VERSUS* GERMAN CULTURE

I. The Fallacy of the Russian Peril

WHEN we assert that in this war of the nations the Allies stand as the champions of Democracy and Liberty and Civilization versus Militarism, Despotism and Reaction, we are almost invariably met with the ironical question: "What about Russia?" And when we assert that it is Prussia which is primarily and solely responsible for the appalling tragedy, the pro-German champions invariably retort with the counter-proposition that Germany is only waging a defensive war, that she is protecting herself, that she is protecting Europe against the "Slav peril," against "Russian barbarism," against the "Asiatic hordes," against the persecutors of the Jews, against a greedy and reactionary Government.

I have had to face this commonplace of the Russian peril in almost every meeting which I have recently addressed in the United States

on behalf of the cause of the Allies. The "Russian Peril" was the great argument adduced by my pro-German opponents. But not only does the prejudice do considerable harm in the United States, it still wields considerable influence in England. Times have no doubt changed since the "Russian Peril" was denounced in this country and since the capture of Merv produced a frantic attack of "Mervousness." But the old "Mervousness" still seems to possess the faithful Radical guard and the old-fashioned commonplaces continue to be voiced even by such "advanced" people as Mr. Bernard Shaw, who does not generally deal in commonplaces. Mr. Bernard Shaw, in his "Common Sense About the War," where so much common sense is mixed up with so much nonsense, seems to have written on the assumption that genius and wit can take the place of a knowledge of the elementary facts of Russian history of which he is unfortunately totally devoid.

II. A Conspiracy of Slander Against Russia

There never was a race more continuously and more systematically maligned than the Slav

race. Truly, it is significant that the word "*Slav*," which in the native speech means "glorious and illustrious," has become synonymous with "Slave." It is a tragic paradox that the very people who have been the one bulwark against Asiatic hordes and a protection against the Tartar invasion should still be denounced as a people of Asiatics and Tartars. It is a paradox that we should revile as barbarians the very nation whose sublime mission in history has been to win over the barbarians of Asia to ~~Christianity~~ and to European civilization.

III. Why the Russian People Are Misrepresented

The plain truth is that for practical purposes Russia still remains a "*terra incognita*" to the vast majority of Britishers and Americans. Even to-day there are probably not half a dozen writers of standing who have a first-hand knowledge of that great nation, with her population of 175,000,000. And the reasons for that ignorance are not far to seek. There are first the difficulties of the language. The Russian language is very beautiful, but it is also very difficult. It seems to be almost inaccessible

to a people who in the past have been so refractory to the study of foreign languages as the British people. There are, further, the difficulties of distance and size. Russia is not a country which can easily be overrun by hurried holiday trippers. Even as you cannot learn the Russian language in two months, so you cannot "do" the Russian Empire in two weeks.

In the presence of those formidable obstacles, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the field of Russian controversy should have been left free to the enemies of Russia. And, unfortunately, Russia has many irreconcilable enemies. There are the Russian Nihilists and Revolutionists who have legitimate grievances against an autocratic Government, and who for generations have made London a hot-bed of political plots. There are the Polish refugees who for a hundred years have pleaded the cause of Polish freedom in every capital of Europe. And, above all, there are the Russian Jews who in every country have constituted themselves the passionate apostles of an anti-Russian propaganda.

The Jewish problem is a difficult problem in

every country. It is becoming a difficult problem even in the United States. But it is especially acute in Russia. Russia has a larger Jewish population than all the other countries of the world together. Russian Poland alone has a Jewish population of five millions. Nor has she ever been able to assimilate or to conciliate her Jewish population. As Mr. Stephen Graham points out in his recent book, "Russia and the World," there has been in the past an irreconcilable conflict between the Russian and Jewish racial elements. At various times Russia has made desperate efforts to reject the alien element from her body politic. The deliberate and often cruel and always futile policy of the Government towards the Hebrew race, and the instinctive hatred of the people, have frequently resulted in pogroms and in organized massacres. And the victims of Russian persecution have naturally avenged themselves by maligning their oppressors. Surely no member of the Hebrew race can be blamed if he is not enamoured of the Russian Government.

All these hostile elements: Revolutionists, Polish refugees, and Polish-Russian Jews have

conducted and are still conducting in Great Britain a systematic campaign of calumny such as the Irish irreconcilables have conducted, and are still conducting, in America, against Great Britain.

IV. Geographical Surroundings in Russia

If we wish to be just to the Russian Government and to the Russian people the first condition is that we should try to discriminate between what is owing to the fatality of Nature and what is owing to the intervention of Man. No one will ever understand Russia's political history who does not constantly keep in mind the close interdependence which exists in Russia between physics and politics, between the economic and the moral factors. This truth is so essential that I may be permitted to emphasize a paragraph in a previous chapter because that paragraph gives the key to the Russian problem.

"In no other country have geographical conditions left a more indelible imprint. Nowhere else have men felt more deeply the all-pervading influence of physical surroundings, of climate and of race. There are some countries,

like England, where man has conquered Nature, where Nature has become the benevolent and ministering servant of man. There are other countries, like Russia, where it is Nature that always threatens to enslave man. In few other countries have men been compelled to submit to that physical despotism with a more passive resignation, the resignation of a Tolstoi, which is so representative of the race. And in no other country has Nature given more cruelly and more emphatically the lie to the noble dreams of idealists. Idealists may dream their dreams, proclaim their systems, and claim their reforms. But the great natural, economic, climatic forces in Russia continue to follow their immovable course, heedless of systems and reforms. The political destiny of Russia seems to have been written not in the book of philosophy, but in the stern and sibylline book of Nature; it has followed the bend of rivers and the curves of isothermic lines; and one guesses its mystery, and one catches its meaning more surely and more easily by listening to the murmur of forests and steppes than by listening to the most plausible theories of revolutionists."

V. The Essential and the Accidental in Russian History

And the second condition which any fair and judicious student of Russian history will have to take into account is a judicious discrimination between what is essential and what is merely accidental. The insensate murder of Alexander II, the emancipator of 40,000,000 serfs, the liberator of Bulgaria and Serbia, a crime which took place on the very eve of the proclamation of a new Russian Constitution, and which deflected the whole course of contemporary Russian history, was an accident and a catastrophe. On the contrary, the near Eastern and Far Eastern policy of Russia has been throughout the ages one of the dominating forces of Russian history. To the philosophical historian it is the general law, it is the normal development, it is the dominating forces and not the accidents and catastrophies which matter. It is the traditional policy, it is the popular aspirations and ideals which alone provide a firm and safe foundation for historical judgment.

Unfortunately it is the sensational accidents and not the unsensational developments of Rus-

sian history which have arrested the attention of historians and publicists. Popular Russian history continues to be written, as if Nihilism and regicide, as if persecutions and pogroms were the one normal and characteristic development of the Russian people. We are told little of the nobler traditions of the Government, of the deeper instincts of the people. We are told little of all that Russia has done for Christian civilization, through her victory over the Tartars, for European political freedom, through her victory over Napoleon, for the emancipation of small nationalities through her victories over the Turks. It is just as if Great Britain were to be judged solely by her pitiful failure in Ireland, or as if the evictions of small crofters in the Highlands were described as the characteristic event of Scottish history.

VI. Necessity of Distinguishing Between the Government and the People

We have already cautioned the student of Russian history against the axiom that every nation has the Government it deserves, and deserves the Government it has. That axiom is only true, and even then only partially true, when the people, as is the case in Prus-

sia, have no profound sense of political liberty and of personal dignity, where they abjectly and willingly submit to that Government. It is only true where the subjects accept the full responsibility for the policy of their rulers, where they glorify, as the Prussians do glorify, every evil deed of the civil and military authorities.

On the other hand, it may happen that the people are much better than their Government, when it would be odiously unfair to hold them responsible for its excesses and abuses, where both Government and people are the victims of circumstances and accident, where the nation have made heroic efforts to reform their abuses.

And every student of Russian history knows that the Russian people are infinitely better than their bureaucracy, and that the bureaucracy is not representative of the people, who in cases innumerable have fought the battles of civic liberty. Russian history is an inspiring history, where even the ignorant *moujik*, where even feeble women have laid down their lives in defence of popular rights and human freedom.

CHAPTER VII

RUSSIA STANDS FOR DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY

I

IF there is any truth in the Darwinian doctrine of "the survival of the fittest," the Russian people must be one of the strong nations of the earth. From early history they have been schooled in the stern discipline of privation and suffering. For centuries they have borne the brunt of the Tartar invasion. Their physical power of resistance and their moral fibre have been tested periodically by plague and famine, by war and political persecution. They have at all times been tested by poverty and by the severity of a relentless climate. In the process the weak have been eliminated and the strong have become stronger. The result has been a sturdy, hardened people, with a magnificent physique and of extraordinary vitality. The final outcome has been one of the creative civilizations of the world,

equally original in religion and politics, in art and literature, a civilization which is rapidly assimilating all the best elements of Western culture.

II. Russia Stands for Essential Christianity

Superficial publicists have identified Russia with Nihilism, and especially with that Nihilist type impersonated in the character of the Atheist Revolutionist Bazarov in Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons." As a matter of fact, Revolutionary Atheism is an entirely German importation. In no other country has the Christian religion struck deeper root than in Russia. The typical Russian believes not in the gospel according to St. Marx, but in the gospel according to St. Mark. Orthodoxy, the *pravos slavie* of the Slavophiles, has been one of the three factors of Russian nationality. As the Prussians are certainly to-day the least religious people in Europe, the Russians are probably the most religious. As I pointed out in a previous chapter, in the Russian language the same word *Krestianine* means both "peasant" and "Christian." Even unsympathetic observers like Mr. Wells have been profoundly

impressed by the childlike and simple faith of the people. Cynics have railed at the superstition of the ignorant *moujik*, as if Christianity were a monopoly of the wealthy, the educated, and the learned. The truth is, that the religion of the *moujik* is the nearest approach to primitive Christianity and to the faith of the Golden Age of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Thomas Aquinas. To visit the Catacombs of Kiev or the Troitsa Lavra on a holiday, to accompany the Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem, is to travel back to the Middle Ages. The Russian Church may have badly suffered from the confusion of spiritual and temporal power introduced by Peter the Great. Formalism and ritualism may play an excessive part in the economy of religion, but the spirit is everywhere alive, and the ideals of Christianity continue to inspire the individual lives of the people. Nowhere is the "Nietschean" spirit so little prevalent. Nowhere is the Christian temper of meekness and humility, of charity and brotherhood, of self-surrender and self-sacrifice so common as in Russia.

And the Christian spirit is a no less potent force in the public life of the nation. As I have amply proved in a subsequent chapter

dealing with the revolutionary crisis of 1905, it was an unpardonable blunder of the so-called "Intelligensia" of the doctrinaire revolutionists of 1905 to ignore the spiritual force of the Church. When drastic religious reforms were originally proposed by the clerical members of the Church in the first Duma, their demands were contemptuously dismissed by a superior "Intelligensia." Those doctrinaires ignored the vital fact that no Revolution has ever been successful unless it assumed a religious form, and that this truth applies to Russia even more completely than to England or America or France. In 1905 the Press of the world unanimously predicted the downfall of the Monarchy and the triumph of the Revolutionists. I confidently predicted that nothing would happen. And nothing did happen. The political leaders, disciples of the superthinkers Marx, and Haeckel and Nietzsche, leaders whose revolutionary theories had been almost entirely "made in Germany"—that is to say, in the very country which never had the courage to carry through a successful revolution—were neither understood nor followed by the people. The only leader who in that eventful year had a powerful following pre-

cisely happened to be a priest. If Father Gapon had been an honest man and an enthusiast, he would have succeeded where all the orators of the "Intelligensia" ignominiously failed.

III. Russia Stands for Democracy

The spirit of equality and brotherhood is universally prevalent in Russia, and I need hardly add that that spirit is the spiritual foundation of all democratic government. Strange as it may sound to the English theorist, Russia stands for democracy. To outward appearance the Russian Government is an autocracy, but that autocracy is of an essentially democratic nature. The Russian Empire is a huge peasant commonwealth, a federation of forty thousand democratic republics, thousands of which have retained the socialist and collectivist organization of the "Mir" or village community.

For the Russian is not like the Scot or the American a born individualist, rather is he a born Socialist. Now, individualism generally creates for itself an aristocratic or *bourgeois* or middle class form of society. The Socialist spirit finds its most fitting expression in democracy.

There is in Russia no caste or class, there is no pride of birth. The mercantile and industrial class is only just emerging, and its place is largely taken by Jews and foreigners. From 85 to 90 per cent. of the people remain peasants. There is no organized nobility, and whatever nobility exists possesses no such feudal basis as in Prussia and even as in England. There is no right of entail; there are no privileges of the elder son. Every child, son or daughter, inherits an equal share of the parental property, and inherits the rank and title of the family. We often hear members of the Russian nobility described in the British Press as Prince Troubetzkoy or Prince Galitzine. The fact is, that there are hundreds of Princes Troubetzkoi and Princes Galitzine, and the title of prince carries with it neither wealth nor political distinction. A man's position in the State is entirely determined by the "Tchin"—*i.e.* by the rank he has attained in the civil and military service.

It is interesting to note that at the other extremity of Europe the same democratic feature should be the outstanding characteristic of two other Slav and Greek orthodox commonwealths —the Serbians and the Bulgarians. Both

countries are like Russia peasant communities. The Serbian statistics of the division of land, with its total absence of large estates, are a revelation of the social and economic conditions of gallant little Serbia. Such statistics are, perhaps, unparalleled in European history. They show to what extent the old aristocracy has been stamped out, and how completely Serbia, like Bulgaria and Russia, is a country of small landholders, and in the strictest sense of the word, a *peasant* democracy.

IV. Russia Stands for Freedom

Russia stands for freedom, for the untrammelled freedom of the nomad roaming over the steppe. The Russians carry freedom to the verge of anarchy. It is not a mere accident that the three most consistent theorists of anarchism, Bakounine, Kropotkin and Tolstoy, are typical Russians. All through the Middle Ages a considerable part of civilized Russia was inhabited by free tillers of the soil. She glorified the free republics of Novgorod, Pskov, and Viatka. As was pointed out in Chapter II, it was only the necessity of national defence and the incessent incursions of Tartars in the East and of Poles in the West which

compelled the Russian people to accept the protection of a strong Government, and to surrender their liberties to the Grand Dukes of Muscovy. And it was only in the sixteenth century that serfdom was established, namely, in the troubled times of the Smoutnoe Vremia of Boris Godounov. It is strange that serfdom should have been established in Russia at the very moment when everywhere else in Europe it was being abolished. But it is stranger still that the Russian peasants should have been free at the time when everywhere else in Europe peasants still were slaves. In the words of a famous French writer: "C'est la liberté qui est ancienne en Russie et non le despotisme."

Freedom with the Russians is an elemental instinct, a fanatical passion, the passion which creates martyrs, which sends its votaries to Siberia and to the scaffold. Political freedom in Russia has often been repressed, it has never been destroyed, as it has been destroyed in Prussia. In Prussia the people have had the benefit of universal education. They have attained to a high degree of industrial development. The German Socialists are strongly organized in a party, they command many millions of

votes. Yet they have never had the courage of asserting their rights. They have been ready to hold processions innumerable. But they have always forgotten that political liberty is not gained by talking, by making demonstrations. They have always forgotten that men must be prepared to make sacrifices in order to conquer their freedom.

The one uprising of the Prussian people was the abortive revolutionary movement of 1848, which mainly resulted in the people offering the Imperial Crown of Germany to the reactionary King of Prussia.

Compare with the attitude of the German people to their oppressors the attitude of the Russian people. It is true, the vast majority are poor, illiterate, inarticulate peasants. They have no Press to voice their demands. They are not organized in a party. Yet again and again they have challenged reactionary Governments. We may condemn the Terrorist crimes, we may come to the conclusion that they were not only political crimes, but tactical blunders, but we cannot help admiring the spirit which animated the Russian revolutionists, even when those revolutionists had their minds poisoned with the dreary philosophical material-

ism of Büchner and Haeckel, and the economic materialism of Marx. Russians, even when they are materialists in theory, remain incurable idealists in practice.

And it is because the Russian is animated with that noble passion for freedom, it is because he is not politically servile like the Prussian, it is because the Slav refuses to be a slave, that we may look forward with every confidence to the result of the new Liberal Constitution which the Russian people conquered in 1905. The Russian Duma is only a few years old, but representative institutions have already struck deeper roots in Russia in five years than they have in Prussia in fifty years. And the Russian people have proved their capacity for self-government even more conspicuously in their local administration, in their Zemstvo which, as well as Zemski Sobor, can be traced back to the remotest traditions of Russian history. The Zemstvo is destined more and more to encroach on the activities of the Central Parliament. For decentralization and Home Rule, Voluntary Association and Co-operation are the watchwords of all Russian Liberals. And it is certainly a significant fact that in a few years twenty thousand agricul-

tural co-operative societies have renewed the economic life of the country.

V. Intellectual Freedom in Russia and the Russian Censorship

A legend has grown up in England, and still largely obtains, that intellectual freedom does not exist in Russia, that every original thinker has been ruthlessly suppressed. It is true that Russian literature has known many dark days of implacable reaction and has produced many martyrs. But even in those dark days a Gogol or a Tolstoy could not be prevented from giving their message. And the fact is, that before the revolutionary movement of 1905 greater intellectual freedom existed in Russia than even in Great Britain, that revolutionists were allowed almost untrammelled to carry on their propaganda through the written word, that the Russian Empire was flooded with subversive and anarchist literature, and that a young writer's best chance to please a large section of the Russian public was to be sufficiently "advanced" and in opposition to the Government. It is also true that even at the present day publicists and journalists continue to be subjected to the censorship. But so are playwrights sub-

jected to dramatic censorship in Great Britain. And British censorship is in many cases more severe than Russian. "Monna Vanna," of Maeterlinck, was widely circulated in Russia. It was prohibited in Great Britain. It is also true that any personal attack on members of the Government or the bureaucracy might lead to unpleasant encounters with the police, but any personal attack in Great Britain might lead to even more unpleasant prosecutions under the libel law.

I hold no brief for the Russian censorship, which is a survival of a *régime* which is rapidly passing away, and which is a disused organ of a vanishing autocracy. But the Russian censorship, even in its palmiest days, was utterly futile, and for the last generation it has interfered with the liberty of the Press just as little as French censorship interfered with the freedom of French literature in the days of Voltaire and Rousseau, in the days when "Emile" was burned by the hangman. Russian censorship does not even prevent an amount of intellectual licence which would stagger the British public. It is the impulsive and irresponsible violence of a section of the opposition Press which largely explains the retention of

the censorship. The Russian extremists have not yet learnt the lesson of British political history, that self-government is impossible without self-control and self-restraint. If the Russian Press used but a fraction of the self-restraint which in Britain is imposed either by public opinion or by the libel law, Russian censorship would have long ceased to exist.

CHAPTER VIII

RUSSIA AS THE LIBERATOR OF OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES

I

THE Russian people have not only wished freedom for themselves. Long before they succeeded in conquering a measure of political liberty for themselves, they had conquered it for their brethren in the Balkan States. Whereas Austria has always stood for the oppression and suppression of small nationalities, whereas Prussia has only expanded by suppressing the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, the Poles in Posen, the French in Alsace-Lorraine, the Russian Empire has again and again stood for the emancipation of small nationalities. Most of the wars of Russia have been holy crusades, wars for the liberation of other countries. The Battle of Navarino gave freedom to Greece. The Turkish-Russian War of 1878 gave freedom to Roumania, Serbia, and Bulgaria. If we study closely the historical record of the Russian Empire, we come to the

conclusion that Russia, almost as much as France, has been the great crusading nation of history. The glorious title of "Tsar Osvoboditel," or "liberator Tsar," which is inscribed on the statue of Alexander II in the Government Square at Sofia, has been earned in like measure by Alexander I and by Alexander II.

II. The Tragedy of Poland

In at least one case Russia has been guilty of an odious crime against a weaker nationality. The suppression and oppression of Poland is the dark spot in the political history of the Russian Empire, even as the oppression of Ireland is the dark spot in the history of the British Empire. In both cases the oppression has been largely a case of religious intolerance, and has been partly a tragic inheritance of the past. *But in the case of Poland it is not Russia, but Prussia, who is the main culprit.* It was Frederick the Great who took the initiative of the partition of Poland, and who secured and compelled the complicity both of Russia and Austria.

Maria Theresa, after the partition of Poland, prophesied only too accurately all the evil consequences which would result from the crime.

But Maria Theresa, however penitent, never surrendered the spoils. Russia, on the contrary, again and again offered to restore the independence of Poland. It was the dream of Alexander I to re-establish an autonomous Polish kingdom. All his efforts proved of no avail, partly owing to Prussian influence, partly owing to the uncompromising attitude of the Polish patriots. After the Revolution of 1830 the opportunity passed away, and the Russian Government entered an era of reaction, and from 1815 to the present day the history of the relations between Russia and Poland has been a succession of lamentable misunderstandings and political blunders.

But, however severely we may condemn Russian misgovernment in Poland, Russian policy has been enlightened compared to Prussian misgovernment in Posen. Whilst Alexander II did for the Polish peasantry what Great Britain was to do forty years after for the Irish peasantry, whilst he transferred, with the assistance of Nicolas Miloutine, the Polish land from the Polish nobles to the Polish peasants, and tried to create a class of Polish peasant proprietors, Prussia systematically attempted to expropriate the Polish peasantry,

and transfer the Polish land to German settlers. And whilst Prussian Poland has been sacrificed to Prussian interests, Russian Poland has become the richest and most thriving province of the Russian Empire.

It is true that even that prosperity has not reconciled the Poles to the rule of an alien Government and to the loss of their national traditions, of their political and religious freedom. The Russian Government have understood in the end, under the pressure of national danger, that a great Slav nation with the glorious past of Poland cannot be reconciled, and will not be satisfied until it has recovered complete autonomy. That autonomy is coming at last. One of the first pronouncements of the Russian Government at the beginning of the war was the new charter of Polish freedom. *Like the war of 1812 liberating Europe, like the war of 1825 liberating Greece, like the war of 1878 liberating Bulgaria, the war of 1915 will ultimately be a war of emancipation.* The Treaty of Peace which will destroy German militarism will also culminate in the reconciliation of the two great representatives of the Slavonic stock, who both in the past have been the victims of Teutonic militarism.

III. The Quixotic Foreign Policy of Russia

Russia has not only defended the rights of small nationalities, she has also consistently followed a disinterested foreign policy. According to his lights, the Russian statesman has been a good European; he has waged war not in pursuance of national ends, but of general ends. There is even a great deal to be said in favour of the theories which the Slavophil Danilewski expounded in his famous book "Russia and Europe." For the Russian policy has been frequently Quixotic and regardless of Russian interests. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the one end of Russian policy was to liberate the world from the tyranny of Napoleon. The Tsar might have divided the spoils with his ally of Tilsit. Russia resisted the arch-tempter and persistently saved an ungrateful Prussia from annihilation. But even more wonderful than the disinterestedness of Russia has been her restraint and moderation in victory. After the invasion of France, Blücher insisted on continuing the war to the bitter end. What Russia considered as a war of liberation Prussia considered as a

war of revenge. He even proposed a punitive expedition against Paris and to blow up the Tena Bridge in mere wanton vindictiveness. Alexander I insisted that not a stone of the French capital should be touched, although the French armies only two years before had destroyed Moscow, the heart and sanctuary of Holy Russia. Prussia also demanded that a despotic Government should be imposed upon the French people, even as in 1873 Bismarck demanded that a revolutionary Government should be imposed on the French people. Alexander I insisted that the Bourbons should grant a constitutional Government.

Unfortunately the disinterested foreign policy of Russia was generally placed at the service of Prussia and Austria. On the assumption that a political understanding of the three Conservative Empires was a necessary condition of the preservation of law and order, Russia made common cause with her neighbours. As M. de Wesselitsky recently abundantly proved in his illuminating book, the Triple Alliance has been the most sinister influence of Russian and European politics in the nineteenth century, and the only Power to profit by the Alliance of the Emperors was the Kingdom of Prussia. No

wonder that the expression *travailler pour le Roi de Prusse* should have become as proverbial in Russia as in France.

The huge area of the Russian Empire has naturally encouraged the belief that Russian policy is determined by lust of territory, that Russia must be systematically aggressive, and must have ever encroached on her neighbours. We forget that Russia is only obeying the irresistible expansion of the race, that Russia already in the seventeenth century had reached the far eastern plains of Asia. We forget that the growth of Russia is but the natural growth of a prolific race which increases at present at the rate of more than three millions a year, notwithstanding an enormous infant mortality. Even if Russia did not add one square mile to her territory, her population in twenty-five years would still have increased by one hundred millions. But notwithstanding that enormous accretion of population, Russia for the last hundred years has not expanded in Europe, and her expansion outside of Europe is small compared with the expansion of the British Empire. The huge Siberian plain was a *terra nullius* and the hinterland of the European plain.

We have seen that the chief national aim of Russian foreign policy from the times of Peter the Great has been the acquisition of a harbour on the open sea. That aim is perfectly justified. The wonder is not that Russia should have pursued that policy undiscouraged by persistent obstacles, but that she should have had to wait for two centuries before achieving her ends. The present war has proved once more how her national security, her trade and industry, are at the mercy of her enemies for want of an outlet on the sea. For want of an outlet on the sea Russia throughout the war has been at the mercy of Germany and Turkey, and has been unable to equip her heroic armies. Great Britain in the past has thwarted legitimate Russian aspirations, she has sacrificed the Balkan nationalities to the unspeakable Turk; Great Britain is now paying the penalty, and is now discovering that she also through her anti-Russian policy in the past has only played the game of the King of Prussia.

CHAPTER IX

RUSSIA STANDS FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS

I

FROM the foregoing considerations it is obvious that those who denounce the aggressive policy of the Russian Government are little acquainted either with Russian history or with the Russian character.

The history of Russian expansion has been one mainly of peaceful penetration. Even today over a million peasants cross the Ural Mountains every year to settle in Siberia. The providential mission of Russia seems to be the colonization of the semi-barbarous populations of the Asiatic continent. And in that mission the Russian people have been eminently successful. The Russian is the ideal settler. He does not possess the commercial instinct of the Jew or of the Armenians; he does not possess the industrial capacities of the Anglo-Saxon. But as an agriculturist, as a colonist, he is unsurpassed.

A peaceful policy is in conformity with the Russian character. The most typical Russian writer is also the most uncompromising apostle of peace. There is nothing aggressive in the Russian temperament. Its strength lies in patience and stoical endurance, in passive resistance. Even the military history of Russia illustrates that character. The French and the Germans are strong in the offensive, the Russians are mainly strong on the defensive. The war of 1812, the retreat to Moscow, the dramatic duel between Napoleon and Kutusov, are striking illustrations of that characteristic in the national temperament.

To-day more than ever peace is a Russian necessity. Russia is only at the beginning of her industrial expansion, and she has still to pass through the ordeal of a profound political transformation. She needs peace to exploit her immense resources. She needs peace even more urgently to carry her political experiments to a successful issue. At the beginning of his reign, Nicholas II, in issuing his famous peace rescript, took the initiative of the modern peace movement and of the Hague Conference. It is not the fault of Russia, but of Prussia, that the Hague Conferences should have failed in

their object, and that the ideals of Nicholas II should have remained a noble dream. The crushing of German militarism will make the dream of the White Tsar a glorious reality.

II

In the opinion of the average Englishman, Russia is identified with reaction. The Russian *moujik* we are told is a clumsy, unwieldy giant, who is only beginning to stretch his limbs. Russia moves as slowly as her own rivers, so sluggish that it is almost impossible to tell in which direction the currents move.

Like most other ideas about Russia, this conception of a reactionary Russia is a delusion. So far from being stationary Russia is, perhaps, the most progressive nation in Europe, and her rapid advance has only been paralleled by the advance of America. Only two hundred years ago the Russian Empire was still plunged in utter darkness. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Russian Government was of so little account that when Peter the Great offered to visit the Court of Versailles, he met with a polite refusal. To-day the successors of Louis XIV celebrate a visit of the Russian Tsar as a great national event.

Everything in Russia has had to be built up in a few generations. The Trans-Siberian Railway is as stupendous an achievement as the Canadian Pacific Railway. The cyclopean highway through the Caucasus is one of the wonders of modern engineering. Ten years ago I witnessed for six months the horrors of the Civil War and the disasters of the Japanese War. Returning to Petrograd after five years I expected to find a ruined, disorganized State. I found instead an extraordinary change for the better: the public exchequer full to overflowing, a thriving industry, universal optimism, a superb confidence in the future. We notice the same progress in every province of human activity. No British newspaper would think it worth while to report about those twenty thousand agricultural co-operative societies which have risen in recent years in the Empire of the Tsars. One Nihilist plot or one Jewish Pogrom would have attracted more attention. Yet think of the enormous significance of those twenty thousand autonomous social organizations which everywhere are reforming agricultural methods and stimulating the most important national industry.

Russia is the country of gigantic social and

political experiments. To use the three favourite expressions of the German megalomaniacs, everything in Russia is "Kolossal," "grossartig," "im grossen Stil." There is no parallel in history, to the emancipation of the serfs, or to that expropriation of the Polish landlords, with which the name of Nicholas Milutin is associated. By one stroke of the Imperial pen forty million peasants were liberated, and tens of millions of acres of land changed hands. The recent far-reaching prohibition measure is another bold innovation of the Russian Government. In other countries thousands of enthusiasts have been speaking about temperance reform and denouncing the appalling results of the drink evil. The Russian Government alone has had the courage of grappling with the evil, and that courage is all the more admirable because in suppressing the sale of vodka the Russian Government have deprived themselves of one-fourth of the Imperial revenue. Surely two such far-reaching achievements, either promised or accomplished in the throes of a great war—the charter of Polish freedom and the prohibition of vodka are of good omen for the future liberation of the Russian people.

III. The Coming of the Slav

After a thousand years of striving and suffering, of oppression and suppression, the Russian is at last coming into his inheritance. This war, which will end in the collapse of the three Empires, Prussia, Austria, and Turkey, will also result in the advance of the Russian Empire as the controlling power of Continental Europe. The future Peace Congress will realize the dream of ages. Byzantium Tsargrad will become the capital of Holy Russia.

But Europe need take no umbrage. The Russian Empire of to-morrow will not be a centralized military Power like Rome or Germany. It will take the form of a federation of self-governing communities. The logic of the Slav political tradition, the pressure of economic and political circumstances, the shaking off of the German influence, the influence of the allied democracies, all point to a Liberal Orientation of Russian politics.

The other Slav States will be finally liberated. Poland, Serbia, Bulgaria will be drawn into the orbit of the leading Power to which they owe their independent national existence. Russian influence will be all the stronger as

it ceases to be a menace to their independence. Attracted by the affinities of language and race, of religion and tradition, the Slav communities will constitute one integral whole, the United States of Eastern and Southern Europe.

That federation of Slavonic States will be the dominant power in the old Continent, and the other States will have to follow their lead. The economic and political interests of the other nations will be so closely identified with the future of Russia, that they will have to seek a closer political understanding and to constitute, in combination with Russia, those United States of Europe which hitherto had been the vain political dream of generations of idealists and visionaries.

PART III

The Great Russian Triumvirate

CHAPTER X

TURGENEV AND WESTERN INFLUENCES

I. Russian Ideals as Revealed by Russian Literature

IN the previous chapters I have attempted to give the meaning of the political achievements of the Russian people, and to vindicate the prominent place which they may claim in the history of modern civilization. I have described the guiding principles which, amidst many errors and deflections, have directed Russian policy. I have also shown how the internal and external policy of the Government is rooted in the ideas and aspirations of the people, and how those ideas have been affected by the peculiar geographical and physiographical conditions of the Russian Empire. No survey of Russian history would, however, be complete which would fail to explain, however briefly, how those Russian ideals and inspirations have found adequate expression in the masterpieces of Russian literature.

In one sense it may be asserted that the Russian people are inarticulate, as the great mass of the people are illiterate peasants. But the instincts and aspirations of those inarticulate peasants have been voiced by some of the greatest creative artists of world literature. No modern literature certainly can boast of producing in one and the same generation such a triumvirate as Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky. To outward view there seems very little in common between them: yet all three writers are pre-eminently representative men. Turgenev is an agnostic and a Liberal, a cynic and a sceptic, enamoured of Western habits and ideas, and he spent the greater part of his life outside of Russia. Tolstoy is a believer, an enthusiast and a passionate reformer, and he spent all his life between Moscow and his paternal estate. Dostoevsky's life is a pathetic tale of hardship and suffering. An epileptic on the verge of insanity, he spent part of his life in prison and in exile. Yet those three great writers, so different in their personal characteristics, are bound by a unity of ideals. They are all characterized by the same Russian depth, the same love of reality and veracity. They have all the same hatred of

cant and convention; they have all the same unconquerable love of freedom; they are all democrats and pacifists. And although typical Russians, they are equally good Europeans. Although educated in the darkest days of political reaction, they all have the same generous and magnanimous belief in humanity. They all repudiate the gospel of Prussianism; they are all in communion and sympathy with the common people. And if we may judge of the aspirations of the Russian nation from the writings of her greatest sons, we can be left in no doubt as to the ultimate Orientation of the Russian people.

II

RUSSIAN literature is the finest of all heroic literatures. No other has raised to a higher level the dignity of a novelist. The Russian novelist is at the same time a man of thought and a man of action. He has a cure of souls; he is an apostle. The Russian novel of the nineteenth century, like the French novel of the eighteenth, has been the chief and almost the only instrument of political and social freedom. The novel in Russia under Nicholas I took the place of the newspaper, the pulpit, and

the platform, for under his autocratic Government the Press was gagged, the Church had sold her birthright for a mess of pottage, and no Duma existed.

Nothing is more sad or more tragic, more monotonous, and at the same time more touching and more glorious, than the life-story of Russian writers of an earlier generation. Nearly all these lives resemble one another. What a lamentable list of martyrs! Radischef, one of the first who dared to expose the horrors of serfdom, exiled to Siberia by Catherine the Great and forced into committing suicide! Pushkin and Lermontov killed in a duel! Griboiedov assassinated! Bielinski, the greatest of critics, Soloviov, the greatest of philosophers, and Chekhov, the most celebrated of story writers, carried off prematurely by a pitiless climate! Herzen, Saltikov, Tchernitchevski, and Kropotkin condemned to exile! Dostoevsky, sentenced to the mines—*damnatus ad metalla*—and spending the best of his years in "The House of the Dead." Plescheeff, Pisarev, Maxim Gorky, put in prison! All suspected, hunted, and condemned under a hostile Government to a life of sickness and misery.

On this list of martyrs, in this struggle for

freedom of thought and of conscience, Turgenev occupies, in spite of his failings, a place of honour. He also knew what prison life meant. He was exiled to his distant property. He was placed under police vigilance, and if he suffered less than others from the harshness of those in power it is because he put the frontier between himself and the police. Far from his country, he continued to fight the good fight.

III

Born in 1818, that is ten years before Tolstoy, in the Province of Orel, in old Russia, and on the borders of that black soil which is the granary of Europe, Turgenev belonged to the illustrious liberal and liberating generation of the forties. Attaining his intellectual majority when the despotic power of Nicholas I was at its height, he bore the marks of that terrible *régime*, and the misery of serfhood branded itself indelibly upon his soul. Descended from the country aristocracy, and bred of a long line of noblemen, he was the last witness of feudal customs, and became the acknowledged chronicler of a society now for ever abolished. A sad childhood was his, whose memory served to darken his whole life. His

father was a rake. His mother, a strange, despotic woman, who lorded it over an estate of 5000 souls, quarrelled with him, and never forgave him for losing caste by becoming an author, when he might have achieved a brilliant military career in the Tchin. He received a double education—*à la française*, at the hands of indifferent preceptors and dancing masters, and *à la Tartare*, that is, at the point of the lash. At eighteen he was glad to escape from the maternal home, with its atmosphere of violence and servility, and to make his way first to Moscow for a season of pleasure, then to Petrograd to taste the comparative liberty of student life. These were the darkest days of political despotism, and the temptation to breathe the air of freer lands was very strong. At twenty Turgenev left Russia, and spent three years at the University of Berlin.

IV

This first absence of three years determined his future life. On his return to Russia he could no longer breathe his native air, at twenty-nine years of age, in 1847, he returned to a wandering life, and left his country for good, returning to it only for a few weeks each year in

order to settle his business affairs. And if at first the love of his native land seized upon the exile and brought him back for a time to Spasskoi, the tyrannical reign of Nicholas did its best to kill these regrets. In 1852, the day after the publication of "A Sportsman's Sketches," he received in prison, as did every *âme bien née* in the Russia of those days, his baptism of liberty. His crime was the discreet praise he had given to Gogol and his "Dead Souls," just as Lermontov had been punished for praising Pushkin. It was a warning. From henceforth Turgenev was cured of his nostalgia. He became more and more "Westernized." For years he wandered across Europe in the pursuit of his artistic ideal, and in the train of Madame Viardot, the famous *prima donna* and sister of Malibran, to whom he was united by a friendship which death alone was to end. He resided alternately in Germany and France, and built himself a villa at Baden-Baden. He, the Scythian and the Tartar, became a type of the uprooted absentee landlord. Far from Russia, he understood her no more, and was no more understood by her, and he lived to be depreciated and disowned by the coming generation of his compatriots.

After 1870 he left Germany, and settled permanently in Paris, and France was grateful to the stranger who preferred the hospitality of the Conquered to that of the Conqueror. An intimate friend of Flaubert, who had organized in his honour the famous dinners at Magny, of which Edmond de Goncourt became the chronicler (*see* "The Diary of the Goncourts"), translated by Mérimée, extolled by About and George Sand, by Taine and Renan, recognized as a master by Zola and Daudet, Turgenev became almost a French classic, and the first on the lists of the new realistic and naturalistic school. In spite of such adulation and affection, exile was not good for him. His popularity in France, besides being a little artificial, could never reconcile him to his unpopularity at home, and he carried in his heart till death the wound struck by an alienated and ungrateful country. His mental sufferings, his irregular life had prematurely undermined his vigorous constitution. Turgenev died in 1883, after years of excruciating suffering caused by cancer of the spinal cord. By a strange irony of fate, he who lived as a disregarded exile returned after death to his native country, and Russia, who had disowned him, gave to his dead

body the honours she had refused to his genius.

V

It is important for an understanding of Turgenev to trace the main currents of his tortured existence, to remember at what date and under what influences each of his books came into being, and, above all, to recall the successive environments in which his lot was cast: Old Russia, the Black Soil, Serfdom, German Universities, the Russian Colony of Baden, the cosmopolitan society of Paris. For Turgenev was a chronicler. He could only describe with microscopic minuteness what he had seen, and make the scenes he had actually passed through live again. If he had had the magnifying imagination of a Balzac or of a Dickens, he would have transformed actuality; if he had had the historical imagination of Walter Scott, he would have taken refuge in "the past"; if he had had the reforming and Christian temperament of Tolstoy, his books would have been speeches and discussions. But Turgenev had none of these. On the one hand he had scarcely any creative faculty; on the other hand, he was entirely detached from all positive Christianity.

He was a complete Nihilist in religion, and even in politics he disclaimed any didactic intention. Possessing to a supreme degree the genius of observation and of psychological analysis, he contented himself with reproducing the reality which surrounded him, and the society and personalities which he knew. This surrounding reality, this society, and these personalities he saw thus through an artistic temperament, which received its profoundest impressions from its environment. To understand this temperament of his, his moral physiognomy, his jarring discords, his eccentricities, his contrasts, one must transport oneself to the Russia of former days.

Tradition has it that Turgenev was a fatherly and patriarchal "grand old man," six feet in height, with white hair and a flowing beard, the soul of a child in the body of a giant, full of kindness and good nature, ingenuousness, and simplicity. In reality, no one was less ingenuous than Turgenev, as Daudet and Zola learnt to their sorrow. The simplicity of the Slav in him was mingled with the duplicity of the Byzantine.

Turgenev is full of contradictions and fundamentally obscure; and these contradictions

explain the contradictory judgments of which he has been the subject, especially in Russia, on the part of the Slavophiles, as well as the "Zapadniki." He is at once a mystic and a mystifier, an enthusiast and a sceptic, keen on revolution, and yet without illusions concerning revolutionaries ("Fathers and Children"); gentle and violent; a believer in ideas, and yet knowing all the time that these ideas will be dissipated in "smoke." ("Smoke.")

Very intelligent, very yielding, and very feeble, he was always influenced by his surroundings. Very young and very old, at once barbaric and refined, he is the product of a civilization which had a fitful and irregular development. When it was the fashion to be Byronic, and to assume a romantic pose, Turgenev startled Herzen and Tolstoy by his dandified affectation as he sported an eyeglass in the Perspective Nevski. When he was in Germany he was a Gallophobe. When he was in Paris he was a Gallophile; yet he did not hesitate to write some very bitter criticisms on the country of his adoption to his friends in Russia.

In fine, his was a nature wavering and complex, a character profoundly sympathetic, but undecided and vacillating, a luminous intelli-

gence, but lacking focus. His virtues really belonged to him; his faults he owed to his education, and to the demoralizing conditions of his exiled and uprooted existence.

And as these conditions explained in a great measure the personality of the novelist, they also explained the physiognomy of his characters, the atmosphere of his work. That atmosphere is depressing, and the physiognomy of the "heroes" is still more so. These heroes have nothing heroic about them. They are nearly all without energy, or they waste what energy they have in words, or in evanescent accessions of violence. They discant incessantly upon the Russian genius, its destiny, and its superiority over the European genius; but they submit to all the indignities of the present moment. Nearly all are "Useless Men." (*See* "The Diary of a Superfluous Man.") They go from one extreme to another, not having their centre of gravity within themselves. They ask from love both the joys and the sufferings of life, but in that very love they reveal the same want of character, of stability and consistence.

Sometimes they sacrifice to a caprice the woman they love; sometimes they commit sui-

cide when crossed in love, without any resource against temptation or misfortune. This paralysis of the will, this *aboulie*—no one has described and diagnosed with a surer penetration than Turgenev, because he himself was so profoundly affected by it, and because it is the constitutional malady of the Russian soul. How can one escape being *boulique*, like Rudin, at a time when the will of one individual could break everything and substitute itself for everything? How could one help being fantastic, like Irène, in a country where despotism and caprice reign supreme? How can one avoid violence and Nihilism, like that of Bazarov, under a *régime* where nothing could be obtained by reason and persuasion, and where one must be either a victim or a despot?

VI

As a writer, Turgenev is without a rival. He is the purest of stylists, the first classical prose writer of his country. Like Pushkin, he had the most intimate knowledge and mastery of the resources and the riches of the Russian tongue. I remember once, when in the Crimea, and wishing to learn the Russian language, I asked Maxim Gorky what would be the best

method to follow. Gorky, the least artistic, the least Westernized of writers, sent me first of all to Turgenev. It is a fact that foreigners begin their study of Russian by reading Turgenev. It is he who initiates them into the secrets of the most complex, the most finely graded, the most varied and most subtle of modern languages—perhaps of all languages the sole heir to the genius of the Greek tongue.

But Turgenev is still more; he is a master of European literature. He has neither the inspiration of Gogol, nor the epic grandeur or the prophetic breath of Tolstoy, nor the profound tragedy of Dostoevsky, nor the democratic sentiment of Gorky and Chekhov. His horizon is as limited and monotonous as the horizon of the steppes. He works with certain ever-recurring types of lovers, proprietors, peasants, intellectuals, and revolutionaries. If his talent remains personal and original, if he has not (whatever may be said against him) copied from his predecessors, he is for ever copying himself. But in his limited world, which is his own, Turgenev is without a rival. The best judges in all countries—Mérimée, Taine, and Hennequin in France; Brandes in Denmark; Henry James in America; Galsworthy in Eng-

land—have recognized, in spite of the obscuring medium of translation, the mastery of his art. He has colour, meaning, order, composition. He has moderation and proportion. He knows how to sum up a situation in a few lines, how to draw a character with a few strokes. He has none of the tedious speeches which make Dostoevsky, and sometimes Tolstoy, so difficult to read. He excels in telling a story. He probably inspired Maupassant, and there is no doubt that Chekhov owed much to him.

As an artist Turgenev seems to have profited by all his experiences, even by the harshness of the censorship; and the failings of mankind ministered to his art no less than its virtues. Narrowly watched by censors, he was forced into those reticences and reserves, and into that veiled delicacy of illusion which heightens artistic effect. Being a pessimist, he had no illusions about his characters, but maintained throughout a Shakespearean objectivity towards them. Had he been more optimistic and idealistic, and more of a reformer, he would have interposed his own reflections between his characters and the reader, using them, too, as vehicles of his own favourite doctrine. But being a fatalist, he believed in the immutability

of his characters, and made them all act according to the strict logic of their temperaments.

It should be added that, though Turgenev contemplates the "Human Comedy" with the disillusioned smile of the sceptic, his smile is often mixed with tears, and his scepticism never excludes tenderness, emotion, and sympathy. So far from excluding goodness and indulgence, his fatalism rather implies them; for to him to understand all is to pardon all. One pre-eminently Christian virtue has survived the shipwreck of his Christianity—the virtue of resignation, and he has kept the best part of Christian piety, which is pity. Like all great Russian writers, he has, amid the loss of many beliefs, retained the religion of human suffering.

CHAPTER XI

TOLSTOY THE BYZANTINE

I

THERE are a hundred and forty million peasants settled on the outskirts of Continental Europe, and rapidly taking possession of the Asiatic plain. It seems, in the fitness of things, that Russian expansion should move Eastwards, for it seems almost impossible to consider the Russian as belonging to the West. We are loth to admit him to the franchise of European civilization. "Scratch a Russian *moujik*," we are told, "and you find the Tartar." Let him, therefore, go back to Tartary, the cradle of his race.

The time-honoured saying about the Russian Tartar is only a sorry joke. For if it means that the Russian peasant, being engaged in a perpetual struggle with the hostile forces of Nature, with drought and cold, with hunger and plague, is nearer to elemental human nature, then it is only a commonplace and a misleading one. For elemental human nature is not Tar-

tar, and the stoical and heroic struggle with Nature is more characteristic of the West than of the East. If, on the other hand, the saying means that the Russian peasant is at heart a Tartar and a heathen, that his Christianity is only skin-deep, then it entirely misrepresents his character. As a matter of fact, the Russian *moujik* moves and lives and has his bearing in Christianity.

To anyone who, like the writer of these lines, has lived with Russian pilgrims at Kiev or Jerusalem, it would almost seem as if Russia and Siberia were the only Christian countries left in the world. In Tolstoy's marvellous and gruesome drama, "The Powers of Darkness," Christianity is the one light which illumines the *moujik* sunk in vice and degradation. On the other hand, if *popular* Christianity remains the great civilizing force, it is almost equally true to say that *official* Christianity has itself become "a power of darkness." And it is one of the most difficult tasks for the student of modern Russia to dissociate popular Christianity from official Christianity. In Russia religion and humanity are to-day working at cross-purposes. The intellectual minority who believe in reform do not believe in Christianity. The

masses who believe in Christianity do not believe in reform, and their religion is being exploited in the interests of a corrupt bureaucracy and of an effete Church.

II

THERE lies, to my mind, the deep-seated cause of the ghastly failure of the abortive Revolution of 1905. When, eight years ago, Russia from the Baltic to the Pacific was convulsed by Civil War, publicists confidently foretold the imminent downfall of Tsardom and the triumph of liberty. I had not been a month in Russia when I as confidently predicted that absolutely nothing would happen, and that reaction would emerge from the crisis more powerful than ever. I realized that an absolute divorce existed between the people and its supposed leaders. I realized that a band of agnostic doctrinaires would never move a profoundly religious people. But whilst realizing the helplessness of the present outlook, I felt equally hopeful for the future. I felt that the day would soon come when the tremendous spiritual forces latent in the people would be released, when those inarticulate millions would find their own spokesmen and leaders. Then

would dawn the day of the Great Russian Revolution, compared with which even the French Revolution would have been only a minor episode.

III

If it is entirely misleading to say that "to scratch a Russian peasant is to find the Tartar," it is entirely true to say "that if you scratch the Russian nobleman you find the Byzantine." And if it is pretty easy to understand the *moujik*, even though you may never have seen a single exemplar of the type, it is extremely difficult to understand a Russian Intellectual, even though you may have met him in every corner of Europe, either as a rich absentee or as a poor refugee.

When, seven hundred years ago, the Crusaders first came into touch with the Greek Empire, they were bewildered by the mental complexity and perversity of the rulers and of the people of Byzantium. And the Byzantine soon became a byword for duplicity and perfidious subtlety. There is a great deal of the Byzantine about the educated Russian. Like the mediæval Greek, he is elusive and evasive. He is a bundle of contradictions. You never

know how to get hold of his real opinion, and even when he has a real opinion, it is impossible to get him to carry it into practice. With him it is the unexpected that always happens. He may be at the same time a Reactionary and a Progressive, a Mystic and an Agnostic, an Imperialist and a Pacifist. a Liberal and an Antisemite.

To wander through the Russian Empire is not only to move through vast distances of space from the ice-bound plain in the North to the vine-clad mills in the South, it is also to wander through æons of time, it is to travel down the ages through every stage of human advance. Visit a Moscow drawing-room, and you will listen to the most progressive thought of the twentieth century, where even the English Radicals are discredited as old-fashioned. You go to the neighbouring provincial town, and you are transported back to the eighteenth century. You move to one of the cities of innumerable shrines and pilgrimages and convents, to Kieff or Kazan, and you seem to be carried back to the Middle Ages. You take a voyage down the Volga, or you ascend the mountain ranges of the Caucasus, and you leave civilization behind.

IV

THERE lies the explanation of the bewildering complexity of the Russian mind. The Russian has a multiple personality, because he lives and moves in contradictory worlds. The Russian Intellectual lives in the Utopian future, while his parents and sisters still live in the days of serfdom. He has assimilated the doctrines of Marx and of Nietzsche, while his rulers are still carrying on the traditions of Peter the Great and the police are still applying the methods of Ivan the Terrible. And the Russian Intellectual must needs adapt himself, unless he is prepared to leave the country or to go to prison or to commit suicide. And having thus from childhood learned to adapt himself, he develops a pliability, a suppleness, and subtlety which are becoming the main characteristics of his type.

That versatility and power of adaptation gives us the secret both of the moral weakness and of the intellectual quality of Russian culture.

On the one hand it is obvious that this versatility must be injurious to moral character. The co-existence of contradictory ideals must

produce indecision of purpose. The contradiction between theory and practice, whilst it is perfectly compatable with sincerity, must be destructive of will-power. and must be fatal to political advance.

On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the extraordinary variety of intellectual and political experiences which any educated Russian has to go through must produce a breadth of sympathy, a range of intellectual vision, a tolerant understanding, a receptivity for ideas which are the charm of the best Russian Society.

Some years ago a Russian prince sent me for approval a religious tract which proved to be a masterpiece of mystic lore. The writer had been living in a circle of English Puritans and pietists. Shortly after I made his acquaintance in England his nomadic instinct took him to Paris. A few months after he had settled in Paris he sent me a literary composition of a very different nature from the first, a Parisian love story, which in its bold cynicism and perverse wit reminded me of the most realistic tales of Maupassant. It was a characteristically Russian incident. In an incredibly short time, and with Slav thoroughness, my friend had adapted himself to the mystic surroundings

of English Puritanism, and to the licence of the City of Pleasure.

V

This seems to be a devious and circuitous way of approaching the character and work of Tolstoy, but I am sure it is the only way to reach a deeper understanding of his personality and of his Art. Most critics approach the Russian giant in complete ignorance of the mental and spiritual atmosphere and climate in which his genius developed. They study his character under the strange impression that the preacher of the simple life was himself a simple man.

As a matter of fact, Tolstoy never was a simple man. Indeed, I do not know in the whole range of European literature a personality more uncannily complex and perplexing. Two years ago, Mr. Bernard Shaw wrote a brief and striking estimate of Tolstoy for the *Fabian News*, and it was amusing to observe how the great English master of paradox was simply bewildered by the paradox of Tolstoy's personality.

Tolstoy's biography illustrates better than any other the distracting contrasts of the typical Russian nobleman and Intellectual. He

saw from the inside every phase of Russian life. He lived in the soldiers' camp and in the Courts of Royalty, in the drawing-rooms of fashion and in the haunts of Bohemia. He lived the savage life in the Caucasus, and the patriarchal life at Yasnaya Polyana. A man of uncontrollable passions, he committed every sin that it was fashionable for a man of his caste to commit. He gambled away his ancestral home, he joined the rebels of his fellow-officers, and wasted his substance in the company of gipsy girls. Yet from an early age he aspired to sanctity. Although professionally a soldier, he early became an apostle of peace. A literary lion in the circles of Moscow, he became the exponent of the simple life. An aristocrat to his finger-tips, he preached the gospel of democracy. A big landowner, he ended by being an advocate of the ideas of Henry George. A Christian ascetic and a woman-hater, yet his wife bore him sixteen children.

VI

Even as Tolstoy's surroundings provide the key to his life and character, they give us an explanation of his art. The one supreme and original contribution of the Russian mind to

world literature is its power of psychological analysis, its broad humanity, its manysidedness, its understanding of every type of human character. Those qualities strike us equally in Gogol's "Dead Souls," in Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," in Turgenev's "Sportsmen Sketches." And those qualities reach their maturity and perfection in Tolstoy's art.

His power of sympathy is unlimited. He understands the sinner, because he has been a sinner. He understands the saint, because he has aspired to be a saint. He understands the savage and the tramp and the peasant, because he has lived with savages and tramps and peasants. He is a stern moralist, yet his tolerance and charity are infinite. He holds strong views on every problem of life and death, and he expresses those views in stirring pamphlets. But when he writes his stories and delineates his characters, the teacher and preacher vanish. The artist remains. He describes the rake and the drunkard with as much sympathy as the good man. Nay, he describes them more sympathetically, for in "Anna Karenina" the profligate Oblonski and Anna the adulteress and the drunken brother are more appealing than Levine or Karenine. Anna may break hearts around

her, but she continues to cast a spell over the reader, even as she fascinates her victims.

There exists a mysterious Indian poison, the curare, once dear to the vivisectionist, and which possesses the terrible power of dissociating the sensory nerves and the motor nerves. The scientist who curarises a dog can torture him with impunity, for the dog feels the pain but cannot stir a muscle to express his sensations. I often think of this weird poison and of the methods of the physiologist when I read the novels of Tolstoy, and when I observe this complete severance and dissociation of the artist and the moralist. I think of him as the anatomist of the soul, who, unlike the professor of anatomy of Rembrandt, is dissecting living bodies and bleeding hearts, whilst all the time he himself remains unmoved, serene, partial, and absorbed in his creations.

It is by virtue of that artistic detachment, that absolute truthfulness and sincerity, as well as by virtue of this power of universal sympathy, it is as the supreme anatomist of the soul, that Tolstoy occupies his unique position in world literature. It is those qualities which place "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina" above any novels that have ever been written.

CHAPTER XII

DOSTOEVSKY AND THE RELIGION OF HUMAN SUFFERING

I

IT is one of the favourite methods of modern criticism which explains a writer's work and personality by his circumstances and surroundings. But there are some literary miracles which refuse to be explained. There are some writers who rise superior to circumstances, and who challenge their surroundings. The subject of the present chapter was pre-eminently such a writer. Dostoevsky seems to have been sent into the world by a special decree of Providence to assert the supremacy of the indomitable human spirit over adverse fate. Small and frail and haggard and miserably poor, he yet accomplished prodigies of labour. Diseased in mind and body, a bundle of twitching nerves, suffering from epilepsy, he yet preserved balance of judgment and sanity of doctrine. Sentenced to death, and the victim of a monstrous miscarriage of justice, he

yet bore no ill-will against his judges, and he consistently vindicated the cause of law and order against revolution. Ill-used by his own country, he yet repaid that ill-usage with the most passionate tenderness. A martyr who endured every extremity of human suffering, he yet remained a cheerful and confirmed optimist. Take him all in all, Feodor Michaelovitch Dostoevsky, the gambler, the epileptic, the convict, stands out as the most pathetic and most Christ-like figure in Russian letters.

II

He was born in a Moscow hospital in 1821—the year of Napoleon's death—the son of a retired army doctor. Belonging to the impoverished nobility from whose ranks the Russian aristocracy are recruited, he was from his childhood inured to privation. He fought his way through the University, and he knew from personal experience the dire straits which he describes in "Crime and Punishment." At twenty-one years of age he emerged as a lieutenant of engineers, but only to resign his commission: he had already discovered his literary vocation. At twenty-three he wrote his first novel, "Poor Folk," which remains one of his

best. In 1849, on the morrow of the Social Revolution which shook every throne of Europe, when Russia was in the clutches of the iron despotism of Nicholas I, he joined a debating club of political reformers. His adherence was purely platonic. He never took part in any plot, for there never was a less revolutionary temperament. Yet, through a grim irony of fate, he was implicated with thirty-six of his companions in a charge of conspiracy and sentenced to death. He was taken to the place of execution on a chill December morning. Standing on a raised platform with twenty-one fellow-prisoners, stripped to his shirt, with twenty-one degrees of frost, he had to listen for twenty minutes to the reading of the death sentence, with the soldiers lined in front of him and ready to shoot. At the last moment he was reprieved; but that cruel scene on that chill December morning remained a haunting obsession and coloured his imagination ever after.

The death sentence had been commuted into four years of hard labour in a Siberian convict station (described in "The House of the Dead"). He spent three more years in exile

and three years as a private soldier, having married, in the meantime, the widow of one of his fellow-prisoners.

When he returned, in 1859, after ten years, his deliverance was but the beginning of a new life of ceaseless privation and suffering. Unpractical, improvident, generous, ruined by journalistic ventures, in the grip of epilepsy and of the moneylender, not a single day was he free from harassing cares, and twice he had to fly abroad to escape imprisonment for debt. When national recognition came at last, when his later books had made him the cynosure of the younger generation, it was too late. His constitution was irretrievably shattered. He died in 1881, one month before the assassination of the Tsar—a turning-point in Russian history. The funeral of Dostoevsky was the occasion of a demonstration unique perhaps in the history of literature. A procession of a hundred thousand mourners and spectators, princes of the Imperial Court, Cabinet Ministers, students, tradesmen, and artisans conducted to his last resting-place the former Siberian convict, the bankrupt journalist, the idol of the Russian people.

III

It is under such circumstances that Dostoevsky's novels were composed. An existence such as his would have broken the spirit of a Berserker, but Dostoevsky (to use his own expression) had the "vitality of a cat." We admire Charles Lamb, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sir Walter Scott for their gallant struggle with destiny; but what are the tragic episodes in their life's drama as compared with the lifelong tragedy of the Russian writer?

Yet, through twenty-five years of distress and disease, his literary activity continued unrelaxed. One novel succeeded another, all of them overloaded with human documents, some of them a thousand pages long, a thousand pages to be slowly pondered over during the interminable Russian winter evenings. And all those novels strike the same keynote of human misery. A martyr himself, he is the voice of Russian martyrs. The mere titles of his books—"Poor Folk," "The Insulted and Injured," "The Idiot," "The Possessed"—reveal the dreary monotony of the subject matter!

Yet Dostoevsky had not abandoned hope, for the depths of misery and degradation are

illumined by faith in Christ and faith in humanity.

Even as his physical vitality resisted the onslaught of poverty and imprisonment, so did his moral vitality resist the onslaught of scepticism and rebellion. Again and again he repeated that his death sentence was the greatest blessing of his life; that it made him what he was, both as a man and as a writer. Dostoevsky, in the book in which he records his prison experiences, "The House of the Dead," has no word of bitterness against those who condemned him. It is difficult for an Anglo-Saxon to understand such meekness in the face of such oppression; but Dostoevsky was not an Anglo-Saxon—he was a Russian of the Russians. He did not believe in the West. Whereas Turgenev and the Liberals held that the only salvation for Russia was by imitation of European ideas, Dostoevsky believed that Russia had a future of her own, and that this future could only be reached by following her own traditions. He was convinced that it was the shipwrecked and the oppressed, it was the convict and the tramp, who alone possessed the secret of Divine wisdom. It was the meek and the humble who were to inherit the earth.

CHAPTER XIII

THOUGHTS ON THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

I

IT is difficult to interest the educated Englishman in a subject so widely remote from his intellectual horizon as the study of the Russian language; and even the Oxford classical scholar, who, it is true, is prodigiously ignorant outside the narrow range of his professional studies, knows nearly as much about the dialects of the Bantu tribes of Central Africa, as about the language of Tolstoy. This dense ignorance and stupid insularity cannot continue for ever. Already the University of Liverpool, under the able leadership of Professor Pares, has done splendid work in promoting intellectual intercourse between Great Britain and Russia. Under the stimulus of the modern universities—more progressive than the older seats of learning—the coming generation will, sooner or later, awaken to the existence of a language which provides as valuable a mental discipline and gymnastic as any classical language,

which possesses almost as creative and as original a literature as the Greek, and a much richer one than the Latin, and which has this further claim on our attention that it is the language of an imperial people which will sooner or later dominate the political world. Already Russian is the dominant language of 175,000,000 people. In ten years it will be spoken by 200,000,000 people. In 1950 it will be spoken by 300,000,000. Nor must we forget the important fact that Russian is the key to a dozen other Slavonic languages, and especially that it is closely allied to the Bulgarian language, and to the Serbian language, which itself is destined to become one day the language of an imperial federation, extending from Dalmatia and Croatia in the West to the Iron Gates in the North and Salonica in the South.

Finally, it has to be kept in mind that Slavonic or ecclesiastical Russian is the common sacred language of all the Greek Orthodox Slav nations.

II

THE Russian language is one of the most ancient of European languages. The structure and morphology of its grammar, as well as its

vocabulary, bring us nearer than any other living tongue to the older Indo-European tongues, Sanscrit and Lithuanian. Yet, in another sense, Russian may also be said to be one of the most recent of modern languages. It is true that as a spoken language and as the language of poetry it has produced from the early Middle Ages an inexhaustible literature of epic and song. But as a written and literary language, as a vehicle of prose, the Russian tongue is almost of yesterday. I have always firmly believed that linguistic development is not an evolutionary, unconscious process, but a conscious activity, that it is not natural but artificial because artistic. The history of Russian as a literary language fully confirms my theory. It might almost be contended that as a literary medium it has not grown, but has been made, and that even as the Russian State itself, the Russian language has been built up deliberately by philologists and academicians, and that its grammatical laws have been codified almost as autocratically as its political laws, although less arbitrarily. It is strange that reforming Russian despots like Peter, and Catherine the Great, although German princes by origin, should have realized the importance of the Russian lan-

guage as a great moral and political force, and that they should have encouraged its study at a time when even German rulers, like Frederick the Great, professed nothing but contempt for their national German tongue. In one sense it may be said that some of those foreign rulers had a clearer consciousness of the magnificent future which lay before the Russian language than even the Russian aristocracy. For the Russian aristocracy continued to sacrifice native culture to French culture. While they themselves spoke the language of Voltaire, they left the native tongue to the *Muzhik*. Readers of Tolstoy's "War and Peace" will remember how, in the *salons* of Moscow, the Muscovite magnates would use the French language even when cursing their French invaders, and how they would submit to the manners of Napoleonic France in the very act of repelling her political influence.

Keeping these historical facts in mind, it may, therefore, be asserted that Russian as a modern vehicle of national culture is barely one century old. The publication of the great "History of Karamzin" may be taken as marking the beginning of the linguistic and literary consciousness of the Russian people. It is all

the more necessary to impress this fact upon our minds, if we want duly to appreciate the marvellous results which the Russian language has achieved in so incredibly short a time.

III

HAVING existed for ages mainly as an oral language, as the language of song and romance, and continuing a precarious and humble existence as the voice of the down-trodden and inarticulate serf, the Russian language would probably have been broken up into dialects innumerable, and the Russian nationality itself would have been submerged in the nationality of its hereditary enemies, the Poles, if the ancient speech had not been preserved in its essential forms in the language of the Church and the translation of the Bible. Church Slavonic has done for the Russian people what the translation of Ulfilas did for the Goths, what Luther's Bible has done for the Germans, what the Authorized Version has done for the English. It has supplied an ideal standard of speech, a *testo de lingua*, which makes the study of Slavonic indispensable for literary as well as for political purposes. But Slavonic has done a great deal more for the Russian people; it has welded to-

gether not only the Russian nation but the orthodox Slav peoples. It is, therefore, not too much to say that the translation of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and the apostolate of the two Slav brothers, has been one of the half-dozen decisive events of the history of the modern world, as decisive as the conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar or as the Empire of Charlemagne. For it is mainly through the creation of ecclesiastical Slavonic that the southern Slavs have been drawn into and maintained in the orbit of Great Russia, and it is as the result of the achievement of St. Cyril and St. Methodius that the Mosque of St. Sophia will be in future ages the metropolitan cathedral of all the orthodox Slavs of Eastern Christendom.

IV

It is deeply to be regretted that the academicians and philologists who, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had to fix the standard of the Russian language, and who had to perform the difficult task of cutting straight roads through the dense forest of the old Russian language, should not have cut down some of the rank undergrowth of the Russian grammar, and that they should not have taken their cue

from their French teachers, those great masters of logic and simplicity. Unfortunately, even after the reforming labours of eighteenth-century grammarians, like Lomonosov, that giant among Russian pioneers, the Russian language remains the most complex of European languages, and the accentuation of its nouns and the flexions and aspects of its verbs are the despair of the bewildered student. It is also unfortunate that, largely under the influence of bad German novels, the Russian writers should favour the ponderous periodical style, and that they too frequently express in an involved participial clause what a French writer would express in a noun clause. I firmly believe that Russian writers would enormously improve if in ninety cases out of a hundred they followed the French analytical way rather than the synthetical German way. At the same time it must be admitted that even though many of the grammatical forms are an *embarras de richesses* and might be sacrificed to advantage, the majority contribute to the substantial wealth of the Russian speech, and enable it to express the subtlest shades of meaning, and to range over the whole *gamut* of human emotion. One preposition or prefix like *po* or *za* will enable

the Russian to express the beginning or the continuation or the repetition of action. A few suffixes will enable the Russian to give free expression to every contradictory feeling. Whereas the English language—probably alone among European tongues—has sacrificed such means of expression as diminutives and augmentatives, the Russian language has treasured and multiplied this invaluable means of emotional expression, and is able to express merely by a slight modification in the ending of a word, every degree of affection and hatred, of familiarity or contempt.

To the uneducated there may be little difference between "ancient mariner" and "old sailor"; but for literary purposes there is a gulf between the Anglo-Saxon and the French-Norman words. Even so, to the uninitiated, the niceties of Russian grammar may be only a game of pedants, but to the artist that game of pedants gives full scope to all the resources of the literary craft; and, therefore, only the literary craftsman can appreciate all the possibilities of that wonderful instrument, the Russian language, and only he can realize its tremendous difficulty. I remember Maxim Gorky telling me once that, in his opinion, there were only

three men in the whole history of Russian literature who had perfect control of their instrument, namely, Pushkin, Turgenev, and Chekhov. Of Turgenev it is certainly true to say that he is the one supreme master of prose whom Russian literature has produced. His intense appreciation of and his intimate familiarity with the French language only made him more keenly conscious of the superior beauty and of the wider possibilities of his native tongue. He admired it and loved it, as only a great artist could love the vehicle of his art. During the reign of Nicholas I, in the darkest hour of Russian reaction, when bureaucratic corruption, military despotism, and ecclesiastic obscurantism were supreme, one thought alone kept awake the faith of Turgenev in the future of the race. *He only retained his belief for the apparently irrelevant reason that a race which had proved capable of creating such a wonderful language as Russian must indeed be called to a glorious destiny.*

V

Still with all our admiration for the Russian tongue, the question forces itself upon us: Is not the very existence of this wonderful lan-

guage an obstacle in the path of civilization? Will it not for ever prevent Western culture from gaining access to the Empire of the Tsars? Will it not for ever keep Russia isolated from Europe? It is strange that while Nature has established no physical barrier between Eastern and Western Europe, and has made one unbroken plain extending for thousands of miles, men should have erected this formidable intellectual barrier of language between the Latin, the Teuton, and the Slav.

But whether the existence of this formidable linguistic barrier is a blessing or a curse, whether we have cause to regret that, merely through the existence of the Russian language Russia can never be assimilated to Europe, or whether we have cause to rejoice that the existence of so difficult a language should maintain inviolate the originality and independence of the Russian people, one fact is certain, that the linguistic obstacle will be greater in the future than in the past. And the sooner we realize this and the consequences which it entails, the better it will be for the mutual relationship of European powers.

If the Latin, the Anglo-Saxon, and the Teuton are to be brought into close communion

with the Slav, they will have to make this effort to meet him on his own linguistic ground. Hitherto, the educated Russian has taken the trouble to learn the European languages, but the time is coming when the European will be expected by the Russian to learn the Russian tongue. As Russian patriotism becomes more self-conscious and, therefore, more sensitive, as Russian culture becomes more self-supporting, there will be a complete change in the relative position of the languages of the world. For instance, the Russian, who neither loves nor admires the Teuton, must necessarily ask himself why he, possessing a more original and a more humane culture than that of the Teuton, should go out of his way to learn German and why he should not expect and compel the German to learn Russian!

And from his own point of view the Russian is quite right. There is no answer to his objections, and there is only one way out of the difficulty. If the coming generation wants to derive the fullest advantage of intellectual and moral intercourse with what promises to be the most original culture which the world has seen since the Renaissance, Europe will have to make the study of Russian a compulsory branch of the

humanities. Pedants continue to wrangle whether they should preserve Latin or Greek or both in the education of the young. I am convinced that the near future will force upon us an unexpected solution of the "Battle of Tongues." Although to the pedagogue of to-day it may appear as the wildest of visions, I confidently prophesy that before the schoolboy of to-day will have attained to mature age, the study of Russian will take the place of Greek in the schools of Europe; the study of Vladimir Soloviov * will take the place of his master Plato; Karamzin and Pushkin will replace Livy and Virgil. Before the first half of the century has run its course, Slav culture will at last come into its inheritance, and will take its revenge for the unjust neglect of the West.

* A complete English version of "War, Progress and the End of History," Soloviov's best known work, has just been published by Alfred A. Knopf.

PART IV

Russian Problems


Kingdom of Poland before Union with Lithuania
Kingdom of Poland at greatest extent
Poland in the time of Napoleon I
Present limits of Russia, Prussia and Austria
Scale of Miles
0 50 100 150 200
SWEDEN
Reval
Dorpat
Gothland
Riga
Mitau
Copenhagen
MOSCOW
Kovno
Vilna
Smolensk
Grodno
Minsk
LITHUANIA
BERLIN
Posen
Warsaw
POLAND
Lublin
RUSSIA
Silesia
Bohemia
Lemberg
GALICIA
Kiev
Kharkov
Berdichev
Ekaterinoslav
VIENNA
Buda-Pest
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
ROUMANIA
Kishinev
Odessa
Nikolaiev
Kherson

CHAPTER XIV

THE RESURRECTION OF POLAND

I

THE English traveller on his way from London to Odessa, after crossing the dreary march of Brandenburg, reaches a vast and monotonous plain where three Empires meet, where Prussia ends, where Russia and Austria begin, a region inhabited by one of the most gifted races of Europe, whose sufferings are one of the tragedies of history, and whose future is one of the perplexing enigmas of international politics. That vast plain, of which no hill relieves the melancholy uniformity, is the once mighty Kingdom of Poland. It is true that neither the name of the country nor that of the people appears on any map of Europe, but then it is often the most important maps that are ignored by the cartographer. In this case it must be confessed in extenuation of the cartographer's omission that the boundaries of that Kingdom of Poland are arbitrary and indefinite. Few geographers will agree as to

the exact area occupied by the Polish race. But we shall not be far wrong if we estimate the total number of Polish-speaking people at twenty millions, of whom four millions belong to Austria, and four millions and twelve millions respectively are unwilling subjects of the Kaiser and of the Tsar. And that number is increasing, for amongst many uncertainties one fact is certain, that in the wide expanse where the Pole and the Teuton are confronted, it is the Teuton who is losing ground, and it is the Pole who is gaining.

II

PERHAPS the simplest way to explain the unique position of Poland to a British reader is to describe her as the Ireland of Central Europe, with this difference, that whereas Ireland has long ago been delivered from the despotism of the Conqueror, Poland is still in the grip of her oppressors. Otherwise the annals of Poland are very much a repetition of the tragic annals of Ireland, and both countries make a similar appeal to the student of history, of ethics, and of politics.

In the first place, we ought to be interested in Poland on historical grounds. Poland can

boast of a heroic past. On more than one occasion Poland saved Europe from the invasion of Turk and Tartar, and although the Poles are branded to-day by the Prussians as an inferior race, predestined to slavery, the truth is that Poland was a highly civilized country when the Prussians and the Russians were only hordes of barbarians.

In the second place, we ought to be interested in Poland on moral grounds, for the Poles have been, and still are, the victims of an odious persecution, which must rouse the indignation of all those who believe in justice, and who believe in freedom.

In the third place, we ought to be interested in Poland on practical grounds, because the question of Poland remains a burning question. Poland remains an open sore. The map of Europe will be recast by the future Congress, on the principle that each nation has the right to decide its own destinies. It is quite safe to prophesy on the basis of that principle of nationalities, that a not distant future will see the resurrection of the ancient Kingdom of Poland.*

* This was written in the Spring of 1913. In the Summer of the succeeding year the Grand Duke Nicholas announced the fulfilment of my prophecy in the following

III

THE "partition" of Poland, the murder of a great civilized people, is one of the most revolting political crimes of modern times. Of this crime, Frederic, called "the Great," was the in-

proclamation. The proclamation is a striking and illuminative commentary on some of the opinions expressed in this chapter.

PROCLAMATION

"Poles!

"The hour has struck in which the sacred dream of your fathers and forefathers may find fulfilment.

"A century and a half ago, the living flesh of Poland was torn asunder, but her soul did not die. She lived in hope that there would come an hour for the resurrection of the Polish nation and for sisterly reconciliation with Russia.

"The Russian Army now brings you the joyful tidings of this reconciliation. May the boundaries be annulled which cut the Polish nation to pieces! May that nation re-unite unto one body under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor. Under this sceptre Poland shall be re-born, free in faith, in language, in self-government.

"One thing only Russia expects of you: equal consideration for the rights of those nationalities to which history has linked you.

"With open heart, with hand fraternally outstretched, Russia steps forward to meet you. She believes that the sword has not rusted which, at Grünwald, struck down the enemy. From the shores of the Pacific to the North Seas, the Russian armies are on the march. The dawn of a new life is breaking for you.

"May there shine, resplendent above that dawn, the sign of the Cross, symbol of the Passion and Resurrection of Nation!

(Signed.) "Commander-in-Chief General Adjutant.
"NICHOLAS."

stigator, and he secured impunity for his crime by obtaining the complicity of Russia and Austria, of Maria Theresa and Catherine "the Great." To use the cynical phrase of Frederic, "the three Sovereigns partook of the Eucharistic body of Poland." The three murderers of the Polish nation have tried to justify themselves, and they have justified themselves by slandering the Poles. Even thus, in Imperial Rome, the public executioner dishonoured his victim before execution. We are told that the Poles fully deserved their fate. We are told that they were a prey to the Jesuits, or that they were a prey to anarchy, or that they were a prey to an unruly aristocracy. We have been long familiar in the past with similar arguments on the Irish Question, and in both controversies the arguments have about equal value. It is quite true that Poland was a prey to anarchy, but that anarchy was largely caused by the intrigues of her mighty neighbours. It is quite true that after playing an important part in European culture, after resisting the Tartar and the Turk, the Polish aristocracy oppressed the people whom they had originally saved. But, alas! the oppression of the people by a tyrannical aristocracy is not a phenomenon peculiar

to Poland, and it was more apparent in Poland simply because of the total absence of any Middle Class, owing to the poverty of the country, and owing to the insecurity of war. It is only in our own generation that we have witnessed in Poland the gradual emergence of a Middle Class. Even to-day trade and industry are largely in the hands of the Jews, to whom, for historical reasons, Poland has become a country of refuge, and a second Palestine. About five million Jews are living within the limits of the old Kingdom.

In any case, those accusations against Polish anarchy, against the unruly Polish aristocracy, were only a thinly veiled pretence on the part of the conquerors to excuse their crime. Those excuses were merely used to deceive public opinion. In his moments of cynical outspokenness, Frederic, yclept "the Great," never concealed his real motive for the annexation of Poland, which was the same as his motive for the annexation of Silesia, namely, self-aggrandisement and the lust of territory.

IV

It is, then, under such flimsy pretences, which added insult to violence, that Poland was di-

vided amongst the three Empires of Central Europe, and that Poland was deleted from the map of Europe. This is not the place to recall the tragic history of the nation since the Partition. In Austria the Poles rose and failed, they rose again and succeeded, and were granted autonomy. In Prussia the Poles were too weak, and the army of the Hohenzollern too strong to give any chance to the rebels; they had, therefore, to be content with opposing a passive and sullen resistance to unjust laws. But most poignant of all was the national tragedy in Russia. The Poles rose in 1830, they rose again in 1863, and once more they rose in 1905. Each time they were unsuccessful. After each revolution, they have been governed with more ruthless severity. Oppression, rebellion, and repression have been the three recurrent phases in the monotonous drama of Russian Poland.

To a superficial observer, the story of the Polish nation may appear to be, on the whole, a history of national failure, but as in Ireland, so in Poland, the people have really triumphed. For their spirit has never been broken. The strength of the three great military powers has not been equal to the indomitable resistance of a poverty-stricken, disarmed, dismembered race.

The Polish people were determined to live, and as a result they are stronger to-day than they were a hundred years ago. Poland is to-day more than a dream, more than a pious aspiration. Unless patriotism is only an illusion, unless nationality is only based on political force, and is to be measured only by commercial success, the Polish nationality is an accomplished fact, for the Polish people are united by the strongest bonds which can unite any people: a common language, a common religion, common traditions, the memory of common sufferings, and an unshakable faith in a common Destiny

V

Of the three component parts of Poland, the Austrian part, Galicia need not detain us, although to the ordinary traveller it is far more interesting that the two other parts. Its capital, Cracow, the Polish Rome, is one of the historical cities of the world. Austrian Poland possesses in the Carpathian Mountains some of the finest scenery in Central Europe. Its Alpine resorts attract an ever-increasing number of tourists, and Zakopane is, in summer, a brilliant and fascinating *Kurort*, and the gathering

place of Polish patriots from the three Empires. But to the student of politics, Austrian Poland appeals much less than Prussian or Russian Poland, except in so far as it shows the political capacity of the people. After being the most disloyal, Galicia has become one of the most loyal provinces of the Austrian Empire. The influence of the Austrian Poles in politics is shown not on the side of anarchy, but on the side of conciliation and moderation. The result of such Polish autonomy as has been granted to Galicia is the best answer to those that maintain that the Poles are incapable of self-government.

VI

If Austrian Poland is the least important, Russian Poland is the most important of the three branches of the Polish family. It is also the most homogeneous. There are some two hundred thousand Germans, three hundred and fifty thousand Russian soldiers and officials, and three million Jews, who are the proletariate of Israel. But the bulk of a population of over twelve millions are Poles, and their numbers are rapidly increasing with the industrial expansion and the prosperity of the country, for,

as Prince von Bülow, the German Chancellor, graciously put it, the Poles breed like rabbits. He might, perhaps, have added that they have often been shot like rabbits. Russian Poland, with the ancient capital of the Kingdom, Warsaw (population, 850,000), is one of the busiest centres of the Russian Empire. But this extraordinary industrial and commercial expansion has brought neither contentment nor real prosperity to the people. Not only has Russian Poland more than her share of the industrial unrest, prevalent all over Europe, but that industrial unrest is complicated by constant political and religious troubles, by the conflict between conquerors and conquered, between Greek Orthodox and Uniats and Roman Catholic. Warsaw, once the gayest of cities, is now one of the saddest. Occupied by a Russian army corps, she gives the impression of a beleaguered city. Any autonomous political life, or even any free expression of political opinion, are paralyzed. The writer of these lines was invited not long ago by a group of leading Liberals in Warsaw to give a lecture describing his impressions of the country. He accepted the invitation, but was given to understand that it would be safer for him not to deliver his ad-

dress, and subsequent events clearly proved that it was better to err on the side of caution.

As there is little political life, so there is little intercourse between the different sections of the people. The Jew does not mix with the Christian, nor the Pole with the Russian. Social life is at its lowest ebb. The police is everywhere visible, and the Polish population lives in an atmosphere of suspicion and suppression.

VII

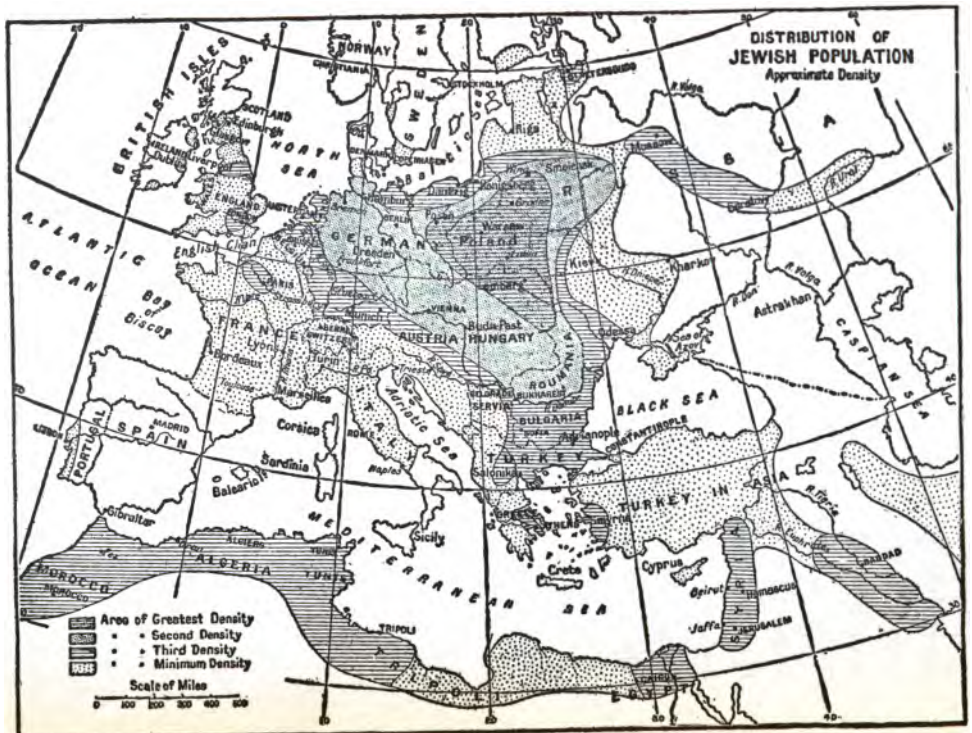
It seems inconceivable that national antipathy could go any further than the antipathy which existed between Russian and Pole before the present war of liberation. Yet Prussia has succeeded in inspiring her Polish subjects with a hatred even more deadly. And this is not because Poles and Russians belong to the same Slav race, whilst Poles and Prussians belong to different races. The Pole hates the Prussian, because there is in Prussian despotism something much more odious than in Russian despotism. The Russian was content in the past to persecute the Pole. But the Prussian both persecutes him, despises him, and slanders him. The Russian at least did not use any canting

phrases. He oppressed the Pole, merely because the Russian was the stronger. The Prussian oppresses the Pole, and calls it civilizing him. He brands him as being of an inferior stamp. German Liberals for two generations have denounced the imperial policy of expropriation and Germanization. But it is getting worse. The Pole is not allowed to hold public meetings, or to wear his national colours. The Polish child is not allowed to pray in its mother-tongue, because German culture, forsooth, in virtue of its superiority must stamp out Polish culture. The Polish peasant is not allowed to possess the land of his fathers, and whereas the Russian bureaucracy in the days of Milioutine has distributed millions of acres to Polish peasants, the Prussian bureaucracy have already spent hundreds of millions of marks to expropriate them.

VIII

Limitation of space prevents me from discussing the Prussian theory. Nor is it worth discussing. The whole pedantic contention can be disproved by the summary verdict of history, and disposed of in the following single statement of fact: Surely a race which in modern

times has produced a thinker like Copernic, a hero like Sobieski, a musician like Chopin, a poet like Mickiewicz, a physicist like Madame Curie, a race which still can boast of the most beautiful, the most witty women of Central Europe, cannot be said to be so incurably inferior to the heavy-booted, sword-rattling Prussian, nor will such a race be subjected much longer to brutal persecution.


DISTRIBUTION OF
JEWISH POPULATION
Approximate Density
Area of Greatest Density
Second Density
Third Density
Minimum Density
Scale of Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500
BRITISH ISLES
NORWAY
SWEDEN
NORTH SEA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Bay of Biscay
English Chan.
GERMAN
Poland
FRANCE
AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
ROUMANIA
SERVIA
BULGARIA
TURKEY
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Corsica
Sardinia
Balearic Is.
Adriatic Sea
ITALY
Sicily
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ALGERIA
TUNIS
TRIPOLI
MOROCCO
Gibraltar
Crete
Cyprus
TURKEY IN ASIA
EGYPT
Riga
Kiev
Kharkov
Astrakhan
Odessa
Constantinople
Smyrna
Beirut
Damascus
Jaffa
Jerusalem
Baghdad

CHAPTER XV

THE PROBLEM OF THE RUSSIAN JEW

I

EVEN more important, even more urgent than the problem of Poland is the problem of Israel. And, unfortunately, the two problems cannot be solved separately. The Kingdom of Poland and the Kingdom of Israel are one for political purposes as well as for economic purposes. Not only do Poland and Lithuania, which once formed part of Greater Poland, include within their boundaries the great majority of the Russian Jews—nearly five millions—but the future of the Pole is indissolubly bound up with the future of the Jew. They must prosper or decline together. It is impossible to liberate the one without also liberating the other. It is idle to speak of the resurrection of Poland and at the same time to maintain the Hebrew population in perpetual bondage. You cannot erect in Poland a free self-governing State, and at the same time exclude from that State the

most enterprising, the most intelligent, the wealthiest section of the community.

Not only is the Jewish problem the most important and the most urgent of all Russian political problems, it is also the most difficult. Russian reactionaries invariably assume that it concerns Russia alone. Unfortunately it concerns the whole wide world. It is impossible to discuss the position of the Jew in the Empire of the Tsar apart from his position in Europe and America. Nor is it possible to understand the present legal status of the Jew without recalling the outstanding facts of Jewish history. The following brief analysis is, therefore, indispensable to a clear intelligence of the question.

II

The Kingdom of Israel is the most ancient kingdom in the world, and withal the most universal and the most exclusive, the most powerful and the most perplexing. The annals of the Jews go back to the dawn of human history, and their records constitute the sacred literature of all Christian nations. They are dispersed over the habitable globe. They were dispersed before the birth of Christ. The

Greek geographer, Strabo, for instance, mentions that there was not a city in the world of Greece and Rome in which there was not to be found a Jewish colony.

No other people surpass them in versatility and vitality. They adapt themselves to every form of civilization, but they refuse themselves to be assimilated. They preserve their rites and customs, and retain their pride of birth as the chosen people. For over two thousand years they have been persecuted, but they emerge from every persecution more powerful than ever, and their power is everywhere resented and everywhere resisted. They are a distracting problem to the philosopher, and their contradictions are bewildering. They are intensely tribal, yet they are cosmopolitan and ubiquitous. They are worshippers of Mammon, yet no people has such a passion for ideals. They are in turn extravagantly rich and miserably poor, insolently proud and abjectly cringing. They are now on the side of the oppressor, now heralds of revolt.

III

Most misstatements and prejudices about the Jew arise from the fundamental misstate-

ment and assumption that the Jews are a distinct race, one of the few pure races in history. To the Philosemite, they are a superior race. Beaconsfield, in a famous chapter of his "Life of Lord George Bentinck," extols the Jews as the aristocracy of mankind. On the other hand, by the Antisemite, the Jew is branded with irredeemable inferiority. According to Houston Stewart Chamberlain the Jews must ever be an inferior type, and especially are they morally inferior to the Aryan. They can never be assimilated. This idea, systematized in the famous thesis of Gobineau on the "Equality of the Races," has been reduced to absurdity in Chamberlain's striking work "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century." The distinguished German Imperialist informs us that the Jews are pre-eminently a servile people, and he draws, amongst many other conclusions, the startling inference that Christ was not a Jew, but an Aryan.

I confess that I have little sympathy with this new fetish of race. It is true that, both through intermarriage and social segregation, the Jews retain certain physical Jewish characteristics, such as the aquiline nose. But mixed marriages with Christians have for generations

blended the type. Mixed marriages in the capital of the German Empire, where anti-Jewish sentiment still prevails, have increased to 25 per cent. And even if we admit that there still exists a definite Jewish type, that does not prove the unity and fixity of the Jewish race. Even as there exists a Jewish type, so there exists a British type, a French type, and a Russian type. Yet it would be absurd to say that there exists one British race, one French race, one Russian race, and it is equally absurd to say that there exists one pure Jewish race. The Jews have themselves recognized two main racial types—the aristocratic dolichocephalic type of the Sephardim of Spain and Portugal, and the democratic brachycephalic type of the Aohkenarim of Poland and Russia. But, as a matter of fact, there are not two Jewish types, there are fifty. Anyone who has travelled amongst the Jewries of the world (and I have visited every important ghetto in Africa and Asia, in America and Europe) must have been bewildered by the variety of physical types. And without visiting the ghettos of the world, anyone who will take the trouble to look at the two hundred striking photographs in Dr. Fischberg's fascinating

volume will be equally convinced of the fact. In the opinion of an eminent Jewish thinker, Bernard Lazare, the Jewish type has not varied less, but has varied more, than any other racial type. And the reason is obvious: as the result of the diaspora, or dispersion, the Jews have been subjected more continuously and more widely than any other nation to different surroundings, and the life of the Jews in such entirely different surroundings as Morocco and the Caucasus, Salonica and London, Jerusalem and New York, must of necessity have resulted, in the course of centuries, in the most divergent racial types.

IV

The truth is that the unity and continuity of the Jew is not physical, it is moral. The Jews are not a race, they are a nation. Wherever they have gone, they have remained a nation. We are too apt to forget that a nation is not a geographical expression. The Poles are a nation, and are not contained within geographical limits. Nor does a nation imply a common origin or blood relationship. The United States and the Russian Empire are made

up of a score of different races. Nor does a nation even imply community of language, for the German-speaking Alsatians were, and still are, passionately French in sentiment, even as the French-Canadians have become loyal British citizens. No; a nation is a collective political aggregate, it is a moral personality. It is bound together by common religious ideals, by common institutions, by common traditions, by common loves and hatreds, and, most of all perhaps, by the memories of common glories and common sufferings. The bonds which hold a nation together are sentimental and spiritual, and no nation has ever been welded together by stronger moral and spiritual bonds than the Jewish nation—bonds so strong, indeed, that the Jews have remained a State within a State, and that the members of the ghettos all over the world have remained denizens of the same ideal commonwealth.

V

THE Jews are a prolific race, and they have always obeyed the Biblical command, "increase and multiply." Of late years the Jewish birth-rate has fallen considerably, but that decrease is more than compensated by the decrease in

infant mortality. It is difficult to get reliable statistics, but there are probably more than twelve millions of Jews in both hemispheres.

Their geographical distribution brings out some striking facts. In the first place, the majority of Jews are congregated in large towns. Of the two million American Jews, nearly one million are settled in New York City. This is, of course, partly due to the fact that the Jews have generally been divorced from agricultural pursuits. It is also due to the gregarious instinct of a weak and persecuted people.

In the second place, the bulk of the Jews still live within the limits of the ancient kingdom of Poland (*see* map facing page 153). Whereas the Jewish population of Palestine is only sixty thousand, the Jewish population in Greater Poland is over five millions; that is to say, for every Jew living in Palestine there are nearly a hundred Jews living in Poland. Poland, therefore, must be considered as the geographical centre of Israel. In Poland they are still living under the old conditions. They still retain their picturesque costumes, and still keep their old customs. They still live shut up in their ghettos, they still speak their Yiddish

language, a savoury mixture of German and Hebrew. Of the many strange paradoxes in the romantic history of Israel not the least strange is this, that the Jewish nation should have found a home and refuge in that desolate and remote corner of Eastern Europe once ruled by the Jesuits, and that the destiny of the Jews should have become so closely associated with the fate of a Catholic people, which, like the Jews, has only an ideal existence; which, like the Jews, has been oppressed and suppressed, and which, like the Jews, has asserted its vitality in the face of economic degradation and political martyrdom.

VI

A FEW essential facts emerge from the most cursory analysis of statistical data, and from the most superficial observation of present-day social and political conditions, and those facts emphatically contradict some widespread assumptions about the Jews.

The first current assumption is that the Jews as a nation are rich. As a matter of fact, the enormous majority of the Jews are wretchedly poor, the enormous majority are a proletariate exploited and sweated by ruthless capitalists.

Nothing could exceed the misery and squalor of the ghetto of Old Warsaw, unless it be the ghetto of New York.

The second assumption is that the bulk of the Jews have now received equal political rights, and that the persecution of ages has at last come to a close. As a matter of fact, the enormous majority of Jews still suffer from civil and political disabilities. It is only in Anglo-Saxon communities that they have attained to political equality. But even there their position is uncertain, and in the United States there are already clear indications of a rise of anti-Semitism. As for France, the recent formidable epidemic of anti-Semitism and the terrible crisis of the Dreyfus affair clearly show how precarious the condition of the Jews still remains, even under the most favourable conditions. In Germany no Jew before this war could hold a commission in the army or hold a post in the diplomatic service, and they are shut out from the higher ranks of the Civil Service.

But it is especially to the north-east of Europe, inhabited by two-thirds of the Jewish population of the world, that we must look to form a true idea of the present position of the

Jews. In Roumania they are denied the right of citizenship, notwithstanding the solemn pledges of the Treaty of Berlin inserted by Lord Beaconsfield. In Russia they are still subjected to mediæval oppression. They are periodically expelled and systematically massacred. Jew "baiting" is a political Russian sport, and "pogroms," or organized massacres, are resorted to by the black hundreds with the complicity of the Russian Government whenever the reactionary parties find themselves in a difficulty.

VII

In the course of their tragic history the Jewish nation have revealed certain striking peculiarities which distinguish them from all others. Morally, they are presumably neither better nor worse than other communities. If their morality is inferior in their relations to alien nations, on the other hand their tribal and domestic morality is probably higher. They are sober and thrifty, industrious and charitable. Intellectually, they are one of the most gifted peoples of the world. The Jewish mind has been developed in the hard school of persecution. All through the severe struggle for life

to which they have been subjected intellect, cunning, shrewdness, were the only weapons that could be opposed to the brutal force of their Christian enemies. Nor ought we to forget that their wandering habits, their linguistic attainments, their world-wide experience, must needs have broadened their outlook, and must have predestined them for their special function as intellectual middlemen and interpreters. Every educated Jew knows half a dozen languages, has travelled in a dozen countries, in each of which he has probably a family connexion. The Jews have always respected intellect and ability. Like the Christian nations, they have had their conflicts between philosophy and theology, between the letter and the spirit. Readers of Mr. Zangwill's "Children of the Ghetto" and "Dreamers of the Ghetto" know that they have had their Obscurantists in the Talmudists and the Kabbalists. They have persecuted their Spinozas and their Mendelssohns. But seldom with the Jews have ideas been at a discount. They may worship money greatly, but they worship intellect more, with the result that in the specifically intellectual professions, in medicine, in law, and in science, the proportion of distinguished Jews is much

larger than that of Christians. In journalism they have attained a redoubtable position; they may be said to control the world's Press, and through the Press they control public opinion and public policy.

Keen and subtle as the Jewish intellect has been, and occasionally powerfully constructive, from the days of Spinoza to the days of Bergson, it was, perhaps, to be expected that they should be even more successful in destruction than in construction. As has been pointed out by a French critic, Monsieur Muret, the Jews have ever been heralds of revolt. In Slav countries they have played a conspicuous part in the revolutionary movement. Even in Germany they have been in the forefront of progressive politics. The German Socialists have produced leading men of action, like Liebknecht and Bebel, but practically all the thinking heads of the social democracy have been Israelites—Lassalle and Marx, Engels and Singer, Kautsky, and Bernstein.

VIII

Of all the peculiar Jewish characteristics, the capacity for finance is the most conspicuous. Almost from the beginning of the diaspora the

Jews have been the moneylenders and usurers of the world. And it is because of their propensity to usury as much as for their national exclusivism that they have drawn upon themselves the hatred of the community.

Of course, the Jews argue, and rightly argue, that they have been compelled to become the cosmopolitan moneylenders, simply because they have been systematically debarred by Christian intolerance from any other profession. They could not be agriculturists, because they were not allowed to own land, because land in the Middle Ages was only held by military tenure. They could not be artizans, because they could not be admitted to the semi-religious trade guilds and corporations. They could not be soldiers, because they were not allowed into the army on equal conditions.

But there is a further plea of justification which may be adduced by the Jews. The ultimate reason why the Jew became the inevitable broker was the fact that moneylending was strictly forbidden to Christians, both by the Canon Law and the Civil Law. The Roman Catholic Church, acting on the counsel of perfection contained in Luke vi, 35, prohibited all lending out of money at any interest whatso-

ever. To lend money to the necessitous was a work of piety, hence the origin of the "Mont de Piété," or public gratuitous pawnshop, which even to-day still retains the spirit of the original institution, and which is peculiar to Roman Catholic countries. The Roman Catholic Church took the heroic and quixotic policy of branding all acceptance of interest as usury. It was a suicidal policy, for it paralyzed the trade of the Middle Ages. It proved an impossible policy, because the Catholic precept had to be constantly infringed, and it was violated even by Bishops and Popes. Popes were compelled to appeal to Jewish usurers in their financial need, as they were compelled to appeal to Jewish physicians in their physical need. Whole libraries of casuistical treatises were written trying to relax the original Catholic precept, and to reconcile it with the practical requirements of the day. The final result was that, first, the Jews and, later on, the Lombards and Cahorsins obtained the monopoly of European finance. The Mediæval Church reasoned with regard to the Jewish moneylender as the modern State reasons with regard to the prostitute. We are told that prostitution is an inevitable evil. Therefore some women must be set

apart, and their infamous but necessary trade must be regulated. Similarly, moneylending is an inevitable evil; therefore some people—the Jews—must be allowed to practise it. But their odious business must be strictly controlled, and they must be periodically deprived of part of their spoils.

IX

MEDIÆVAL intolerance has gone. Religious persecution and religious wars have ceased. Yet the Jewish problem remains as acute as ever. Politically, it remains as acute because the national exclusivism of the circumcized people still survives. The Jews still consider themselves as exiles in the land where they choose to settle. Economically, the Jewish problem is even more acute than ever, because the enormous development of national and international finance has given to the Jewish people opportunities which they never had before.

National exclusivism and international finance, and not religious intolerance, are the root causes of anti-Semitism, and as long as those causes are operative the effect will remain. As long as the Jews constitute distinct colonies

within the community, as long as the Jews specialize in the predatory and parasitic activities of finance, so long shall we witness outbursts of anti-Semitic feeling.

But signs are not wanting that far-reaching changes are taking place. Intermarriages between Jews and Christians have, as we pointed out, enormously developed in recent years; so rapidly, indeed, have they developed that Professor Ruppin, in his recent striking book, announces the impending absorption of the Jewish people. On the other hand, the exploitation of capitalism is threatened by the universal advance of Socialism and the awakening of the social conscience. With the decrease of the omnipotence of capitalism the power of the Jews will also decrease. It has been said that the Jew is a microbe which only attacks unsound constitutions, but which is harmless to healthy constitutions. This much is true, that the Jew is not a cause, but a result. It is the bad constitution of the body politic which develops the bad qualities of the Jew. The Jews cannot be held responsible for the tyranny of modern capitalism, even though they have profited by it. On the contrary, no writers have denounced

more fiercely than Jewish writers the iniquity of modern conditions.

With the breakdown of Jewish national exclusivism, with the dawn of social justice, the last vestiges of anti-Semitism will probably disappear, and the Jewish problem will solve itself.

X

But the Jewish problem cannot solve itself in other parts of the world as long as it has not found a solution in Russia, which is the new Palestine, which is the very heart and centre of Israel. The Jewish problem cannot solve itself as long as five million Hebrews remain the victims of a most odious mediæval oppression. Unfortunately, in the course of the last twenty years, the position of the Jew in Russia has not become better, rather has it become worse. The Jew is still cooped up within that huge Polish ghetto called the "Pale." He is still forbidden access to the land. He is still tracked by the police and periodically decimated by organized massacre. And the pogroms are becoming more frequent and more savage. He is still forbidden entrance to the Civil Service. He is still largely excluded

from the Liberal Professions, only from 5 to 7 per cent. of Jews being allowed into the Russian Gymnasia and the Universities. The Jew has had no share in the partial political enfranchisement which followed the Russo-Japanese War, and he is suffering throughout the present war more than any other nation, more even than the martyred Belgians and Serbians.

XI

THE greatest religious philosopher and political leader the Russian race has produced, the Catholic Vladimir Soloviov, has put in a nutshell the arguments in favor of the Jews:

"Poland presents a remarkable phenomenon. The social elements there are represented by separate nationalities. The Russians constitute the agricultural population of the villages. The Upper Class is constituted by Poles. The Industrial population of the towns by Hebrews. If the Hebrews, not only under favourable but generally under most unfavourable circumstances, manage to establish a firm hold in the cities of Western Russia, that simply proves that they are more capable than the Russian peasant or the Polish nobility to constitute an industrial class. If, on the other hand, such an

industrial class in every country instead of helping the agricultural population is found to live at their expense, it is not to be wondered at that the Hebrews, wherever they constitute the whole industrial class, should also appear as the exploiters of the people. It is not they who created such a situation. They were schooled too long in the school of the Polish nobility which equally oppressed both the Jews and the Polish serfs. But quite apart from the Polish nobility, is not the selfish oppression of one class over the others the universal rule of social life in the whole of Europe? If our peasants suffered from the oppression of the Jews, who only exist by virtue of the helpless social economic situation of those peasants, that situation was not caused by the Hebrews. The needy peasant goes to the Jew simply because his own people refuse to help him. And if the Jews who assist the peasant exploit him, they do not do so because they are Jews, but because they have obtained the monopoly of national finance which is entirely based on the exploitation of the people. The evil is not due to the Jew, nor to finance, but to the immoral supremacy of finance, and that supremacy was

not created by the Jews. It is not the Jew who separated the provinces of political economy from that of morality and religion. It is civilized Europe which, having based political economy on impious and inhuman principles, reproaches the Jew because they follow their principles."

XII

THE worst of the present legislation against the Jew is that it defeats its purpose. It is not only odious; it is gratuitous. It is futile. It is politically insane. We are told that the Jew must be denied access to the land for the protection of the helpless *moujik*, but the present legislation by preventing the Jew from owning land, from becoming an independent farmer, makes him instead a constant menace to the independent farmer, dooms him to the odious profession of a usurer and a publican. The Jew may not own land, but he may lend money at usurer's interest to the peasant who owns the land, and may thus have the peasant and landowner at his mercy.

We are told that if the Jew were admitted in any large numbers to the Liberal Professions,

he would in a short time invade every career to the detriment of the Russian born. That assumption is a gratuitous insult to the intelligence and the ability of the Russian people. It is an admission that a Russian doctor, a Russian lawyer, a Russian engineer have no chance in any fair competition with the Hebrew. I cannot believe that the Russian is so hopelessly inferior to the Hebrew. I do not dread competition for the Russian. I believe, on the contrary, that all that the Russian people want is competition and not Government protection. Competition with the Jew, so far from being detrimental to the Russian, will awaken his dormant capacities. One explanation of the present arbitrary legislation, and that is probably one reason why it is being retained, is that it gives both the police and the bureaucracy unlimited opportunities of graft. It is an open secret that the regulations which restrict to the proportion of 5 to 7 per cent. the admission of the Jew to the Higher Government Schools, are being constantly evaded, and that wealthy Jews by paying a sufficient bribe to the authorities can always secure admission.

XIII

We are further told that the Jew must not be given the same civil rights as the Russian, because even when he becomes naturalized he remains an alien. But the present legislation only succeeds in making him an irresponsible enemy of Russia, whilst at the same time keeping him settled in huge numbers in one of the most vital parts of the Empire, like a festering wound in the Russian body politic.

If it be really true that the Jew is a hostile alien, and that he can never be assimilated, then the logical policy for the Government would be to expel that alien even as Louis XIV expelled the Huguenots, even as the Spaniards expelled the Moors. But the existing legislation inflicts a maximum of suffering without producing any political result.

We are finally told that even as the Russian people must be protected by depriving the Jew of civil rights, so the Russian State must be protected by depriving the Jew of political rights. For the Jew is a Revolutionist, an Anarchist and no Government could be carried on if he were conceded full political rights.

But here, again, the present legislation entirely defeats its purpose. It only makes the Jew into a passionate opponent of the existing Government. If it be difficult to govern with the Jew, it is impossible to govern with the Jew as an irreconcilable enemy. For even the strongest Russian Government is not a match for the Jew. For the Jew is able to use against the Government all the driving power of hatred and revenge, all the resources of a subtle intellect, all the power of the Press, and he also has the power of turning against the established authorities the two most potent forces in the world—international finance and international opinion, as the allies are finding out to their cost.

XIV

THERE is only one solution to the Jewish problem, and that is a complete reversal of the old policy of intolerance and inequality and iniquity, an uncompromising acceptance of the principle that liberty with all its risks and perils is preferable to protection with all its false security.

That solution is imperative not only in the interests of the Jew but in the interests of the

Russian people, and in the interests of political freedom generally. A political freedom which would be doled out to some sections of the people and withheld from others, a freedom of the Press which would be granted to some papers and refused to others, a religious toleration which would be conceded to the Catholics and refused to the Jews or the Armenians will not work. There is a limit to political contradiction, even in a land of contrasts such as Russia. The Russian bureaucracy and the Russian Church must give up their traditional policy of racial and religious antagonism, or they will inevitably revert to the evil of their ways.

And let us hear no more of the feeble argument that the Russian people have perfectly legitimate grievances against the Jews, that they have old scores to pay off. I know they have. It would have been a miracle, indeed, if the degrading legislation imposed for centuries upon the inmates of the ghetto and the ghastly persecution they have suffered had not left its mark on the Hebrew race. But what have a thousand legitimate grievances to do with the concession of political rights? In so far as the Jews act dishonourably in private life, they

must be prepared to pay the penalty, and no State can protect them against the contempt or the hatred of the community. But the retaliation of individuals for injustice done in private life cannot be allowed to the Government. The argument of revenge or retribution is therefore entirely irrelevant. To indulge in a spirit of vindictiveness is not a duty of the State. The State is not a Corsican community organized for vendetta, it is not even an instrument of moral retaliation. Its function is not to dispense retributive justice. The one primary and essential duty of a State is to secure equal and civil rights to all its citizens, and the Russian State of to-morrow will have to discharge that duty to all the members of the Hebrew race.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

THE following pages were written in Moscow nine years ago under the direct impression of the Civil War which shook the Russian Empire to its very foundations. Such was the elemental violence of the political hurricane that every European publicist predicted the imminent fall of Russian Tzardom. From a close examination of the situation and from a systematic calculation of the political forces at work, I was driven to adopt quite a different conclusion. I confidently predicted that nothing would happen. Nothing did happen. Tzardom weathered the storm. The Government was stronger after the war than before. The revolution proved abortive.

The revolution collapsed. But it was easy to foresee that the revolutionary forces would only be driven back to gather strength for another and a more determined onslaught. The great Italian thinker, Vico, the father of the

modern philosophy of history, tells us that human history is only a succession of *corsi* and *ricorsi*—of periodical recurrences—that mankind moves in a spiral, each successive generation, reverting to the point from which it started, but each time starting afresh on a higher level. Contemporary Russian history strikingly illustrates this theory of "recurrences." The internal political situation in Russia after the European War will be substantially the same as that which existed after the Russo-Japanese War. All the difficulties which confronted the Government in 1906 will still confront the Government in 1916. Nearly all the reforms which demanded a solution then still demand a solution to-day. The land question is still largely unsolved. Decentralization and Home Rule are wanted as urgently as ever. Finland and Poland still demand autonomy. An independent judicature, an independent Church, an independent Press, are still pious *desiderata.* Armenians and Jews are still suffering from shocking disabilities and still require protection against organized massacre.

The only difference between the political situation in 1906 and the situation to-day is this, that the demands for reform will be far

more pressing, and that the reforms themselves have come much more nearer maturity. It will be far more difficult to refuse satisfaction after a great democratic and national conflict. As I have attempted to prove in the course of this book, a great national war in Russia has always acted as a Revolutionary force in the political development of Russia. It seems, therefore, a safe prediction that the Russian Empire after this war will undergo a more far-reaching transformation than at any other period since Peter the Great. The only doubtful point is whether the Government will take a bold initiative as Alexander II did in the sixties, or whether reform will come as the result of a social upheaval as happened in 1906.

Whatever the immediate future may have in store for the Russian people, I have no hesitation as to the policy which ought to be followed on the morrow of the war, nor is there a single paragraph in the following pages which I would be prepared to alter. The forecasts which I made then I still confidently make to-day. The remedies which I propounded then I propound still more emphatically to-day. More firmly than ever do I believe that salvation will not come through a perennial and sterile conflict

between two irreconcilable hostile forces, between a powerless Executive and an all-powerful Revolutionary Convention. Rather will salvation come through the systematic co-operation between a strong Executive and an Assembly of wise, moderate, practical and patriotic representatives ready to meet the Government half-way in the path of necessary reforms. More firmly than ever do I believe that salvation will come not primarily through a centralized Parliament superimposed upon a centralized bureaucracy, but through the releasing of new political forces, through the establishment of Autonomous Provinces and Independent Nationalities, and especially through the releasing of the spiritual forces, through the creation of Independent Churches. More firmly than ever do I believe that an unconditional concession of religious liberty, an honest application of the Edict of Toleration of 1905, must be the antecedent of political liberty.

Russian reformers are too much inclined to believe in the servile imitation of the British Parliamentary régime, in the adoption of the British Party System. The trouble is that whereas there are only three Parties in the British House of Commons there are twenty

conflicting Parties in the Russian Duma, and it will readily be conceded that even an ideal British Parliament could not work very smoothly under such conditions. If the Russian Reformers must be guided by British precedents, let them be inspired by the wonderful example of the British Empire, which is not a centralized Empire, but a world-wide federation of self-governing communities, and where the Crown is but the visible symbol of political unity, the arbiter of all nationalities, the rallying centre of Imperial loyalty. It is only through the Russian Empire being converted into such a federation of free communities, it is only through deliberately renouncing national and racial antagonism, through repudiating religious intolerance, that the Russian people will work out their own destinies.

The historical inquiry before us is not one of purely academic interest. It is one of supreme *practical* importance. The political condition of Russia to-day is very like the political condition of France in 1789. To the Russian Revolutionists, the French Revolution is not a dead and distant past, it is a living present; it continues, and it will continue for a generation to come, to exert a subtle and profound influ-

ence which it is impossible to overrate. Even as the leaders of the French Revolution were haunted by the memories of ancient Rome, and by the heroes of Plutarch, the Russian Revolutionists are obsessed and possessed by the tragic events of 1789, and the heroes of the Terror. These events and these men are to them a permanent source of inspiration. Every psychologist and sociologist who has investigated the power of hypnotic suggestion and the laws of imitation will realize the enormous significance of the fact, all the more so because the Russian Revolution must be to some extent a purely artificial revolution and not a spontaneous outburst of elemental forces. Nearly all the leaders belonged to the intellectual classes, to what is characteristically called in Russia the "*Intelliguenz.*" And these leaders have been brought up on the theories of 1789, they have been fed on the "Immortal Principles." They appear to me like students who are repeating to themselves lessons vaguely understood, or like actors who want to rehearse the same tragic parts over again. They would like to persuade the world that the Russian people are engaged in the same struggle for freedom and equality, and that their triumph would inaugurate a new

era for Russia and for mankind. *They insist that the one event is as inevitable as the other, that resistance is equally futile*, that any form of opposition will only make the ultimate triumph more decisive and more bloody, and that Russia is doomed to travel the same road as the France of 1789—*from Despotism through Terror, towards Liberty.*

We saw in 1905 the scenes familiar to every student of history, the same passions, the same demagogues, the same spirit of optimism; we listened with the same grim irony to the same debates on the abolition of the death penalty on the very eve of a life-and-death struggle in which the same philanthropists threatened us that rivers of blood must flow. And did we not seem to hear the ring of the same historical words? How many revolutionists must have repeated on the dissolution of the first Duma the words of Mirabeau: *Nous sommes ici par la Volonté du peuple et nous n'en sortirons que par la force des bayonnettes!* How many of them were nerving themselves to action with the dictum of Danton: *De l'Audace, et encore de l'audace et toujours de l'audace!* How many of them challenged their enemies with the Frenchman's outburst: *Jetons leur en défi une*

tête de roi! And how many Conservatives did repeat the pathetic lamentation: *O Liberté, que de crimes sont commis en ton nom!*

It must, therefore, be a subject of the most absorbing interest closely to investigate how far the analogies are real or misleading, and whether we may infer and expect similar conclusions from similar causes and similar antecedents; whether history is actually repeating itself and will give us a rehearsal, on a larger scene, of the tragedy which was enacted a hundred and twenty years ago.

I. Analogies Between the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution

But it must be understood that the question before us is not merely whether there are certain *broad and general resemblances* between the two situations. Such broad analogies are only what one would naturally expect. All revolutionary outbursts, like the catastrophes of elemental nature, have some common features, because human nature in such emergencies remains the same in all times and in all climes. Everywhere, whether in Athens, in Rome, or in London, we find at work the same forces, the same motives disguised under different princi-

ples. Everywhere the people are used as tools and dupes in a movement which succeeds only through them, but not always with benefit to them. *Sic vos non vobis.* Everywhere we witness the same plot unfolding in the same manner: first an effete and corrupt Despotism—then Anarchy and Terror, and finally a Military Dictatorship: Cæsar or Medici, Cromwell or Napoleon.

It is not such broad human analogies which we are investigating. It must be obvious to the most superficial observer that there are between the two situations analogies much more special, much more unexpected, much more striking. Indeed so striking do they seem, that the Russian Revolution of 1905 may verily appear at first sight as a second edition, alas, not always corrected nor improved, but only expanded—of the Revolution of 1789!

(*a*) In both countries do we find at work the same political causes, the same political evolution. The reforms of Peter the Great seem copied from the administrative *reforms* of Louis XIV, with Provincial Governors taking the place of the French Intendants, with a mock aristocracy, only on court parade not on active duty. We find the same arbitrary autocracy,

the same absentee landlords, the same corrupt bureaucracy, the same all-absorbing centralization killing all local initiative.

(*b*) In both countries we are struck with the same sudden *paralysis* of the executive power, the same wavering and divided counsels, the same court intrigues, the same good intentions, the same absence of a man strong enough to control the destructive forces.

(*c*) In both countries we find the same intellectual and spiritual antecedents, and just as in France all through the eighteenth century, so in Russia all through the nineteenth, the political revolution has been preceded and partly caused by a philosophical revolution. In both countries we witness a shaking of religious beliefs by the leaders of thought, a criticism of all existing institutions. In both cases we are confronted with the same striking contradiction between political despotism and spiritual anarchy, we see the same gathering of positive and negative electricities, bound to end in the same explosion. Almost every epoch-making writing of Voltaire and Montesquieu, of Diderot and Rousseau, has its counterpart in Russian literature. For Russian literature in the nineteenth century is not a purely artistic or contemplative

literature. Each masterpiece has its political tendencies, is written with a purpose. Already, sixty years ago, the "Revizor" of Gogol was a blow dealt at bureaucracy. His "Dead Souls," as well as Turgenev's "A Sportsman's Sketches," are an attack on serfdom. Turgenev's novel, "Fathers and Sons," is an analysis of nihilism. Dostoevsky's "The House of the Dead" is a revelation of the horrors of Siberian convict life. And to take the work of the two men, who in both countries have had the most magnetic influence—would it be possible to imagine a writer more like Rousseau than Tolstoy? No doubt Tolstoy is by far the more consistent thinker, the stronger personality, the nobler character, and the more creative and more original artist, indeed the most original artist the world has seen since Shakespeare; but apart from these personal characteristics, the work of the two men presents the most extraordinary similarity, and the influence of the one on the other is obvious and openly admitted by Tolstoy himself. In both we find the same extreme doctrines preached with the same earnestness and passionateness, the same subjective individualism, the same unexpected interpretation of Christianity, the

same Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar, the same attack on a Temporal Church in the name of an Eternal Gospel, the same attacks on society and civilization, the same optimism and appeal to the original goodness of man, the same return to Nature, to the Simple Life. And although Tolstoy's consistent anarchism prevents him from accepting the principles of Rousseau's Social Contract, these principles have found universal favour with the Russian Revolutionists.

And both in France and in Russia, the party of revolution seems to hold the field unchallenged. Just as the Gallican Church was silent after the golden age of Bossuet and Fénelon, even so the Russian Church has not produced, in the hour of need, one single great thinker, one single statesman. The only theological thinker Russia has produced in the nineteenth century, Vladimir Soloviov, so far from defending the Orthodox Church, preaches the reunion with Roman Catholicism.

(*d*) But not only do we find in both countries the same intellectual antecedents, with the same humanitarian creed, with the same radical uncompromising spirit, the same absence of the historical sense, the same belief in the regenera-

tion of mankind, the same attitude to the Church and to positive Christianity, so different from the attitude of the English Puritan and Scottish Covenanters—but in Russia, as in France, *the impulse has come from abroad.* The Anglomania of the French thinkers is paralleled by the Cosmopolitanism of the Russian writers. Whilst Russian imaginative literature is supremely original, political literature is almost entirely borrowed from the West. The great Slavophile writers, Samarine, Aksakov, Chomiakov, Danilevski, have found little hearing. Even Tolstoy was repudiated since he expressed his disbelief in Western Parliamentary Institutions. The only doctrines that find favour are imported from England, France, and especially Germany. The present political philosophy in Russia is an *olla podrida*, a discordant *pot pourri* of Spencer, Buckle, Rousseau, Proudhon, Feuerbach, Marx, and Nietzsche. The destructive thought of the whole world is made tributary to the Russian revolution.

(*e*) In both countries the revolution finds its chief supporters in the upper classes. Mirabeau, La Rochefoucauld, La Fayette, Lameth, Noailles, the Duke of Orleans, have found their

successors in the three Princes Troubetzkoy, in Prince Dolgoroukov, in Prince Lvov, in Count Heyden. The aristocracy join the movement partly from dilettantism, partly from generous convictions, partly from ambition. They have been ruined by luxury, and by the emancipation of the serfs. They have been ousted from high places by the bureaucracy. They would like to play a part in the new *régime*. They hope that whilst leading the revolutionary forces they may be able to control them, but being generally absentee landlords they have lost touch with the people; being imbued not with the national spirit, but with foreign theories, they have forfeited their confidence.

(*f*) In Russia as well as in France we find the same financial and economic distress, the same agrarian fermentation. In both countries the peasantry form the backbone of the population, and their condition is lamentable. We all know the lurid picture in La Bruyère of the "wild beasts in human form." We have all read the gloomy accounts of Tolstoy, and the "power of darkness" in Russian villages. The peasant in 1905 was the silent pathetic chorus in the tragedy, at first keeping in the background whilst aristocrats and journalists fill the

foreground. He is the dumb inarticulate actor whom nobody understands, whom hitherto everybody has neglected, but in whose name every one now claims to speak, whose interests every one claims to defend, because all feel that on him depends the ultimate success or failure of the revolution.

(*g*) In both countries the revolution begins with the same experiment of a centralized Parliament superimposed upon a centralized bureaucracy, doomed to end in failure, because it is without any root in the past, and cannot meet the needs of the people. And in both Parliaments we hear the same palaver, the same speeches, earnest yet hollow, sincere yet with the ring of rhetoric. In those long speeches of the first Duma on the abolition of the death penalty, do we not hear some echo of "Sea-green" Robespierre, who resigned his position as a judge because he could not muster the courage to inflict a death penalty, and who yet did not hesitate to send thousands of his opponents to the guillotine, and to wade to power through those same "rivers of blood" which his Russian imitators are prepared to cross!

(*h*) And do we not see the same strange contrast between the tragic magnitude of events,

the immensity of the scene, and the mediocrity of the heroes? Even Michelet confesses to this mediocrity of the heroes of 1792. Speaking of the Club des Jacobins, he tells us "that collective action was far more powerful there than individual action, that the strongest, the most heroic individual, lost his advantages. In such associations, active mediocrity rises to importance, genius weighs very little." * Mirabeau is left without a successor, and even in his lifetime it is now historically proven that his real influence was very limited, and that his fiery speeches seldom turned the votes of the Constituent Assembly. Even so in Russia. The scene extends from the Baltic to the Pacific Ocean. The issues at stake are tremendous. And yet the chief actors are ordinary human beings like ourselves, honest and inconsistent, clever and weak, themselves led by events instead of being born leaders and rulers of men. We are still waiting for the one great Russian statesman to appear.

(*i*) And finally, both revolutions were greeted by the unanimous applause of a sympathetic world. At the beginning of the French Revolution, not only poets like Wordsworth

* Michelet, "Révolution Française," II, 75, 76.

and Schiller, philosophers like Kant and Fichte, even practical statesmen hail the event as the beginning of a new era. The leader of the Liberal Party, Fox, indulges in the same declarations as his successor, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. But in both cases the sympathy is equally hollow, because based on a complete ignorance of the real state of affairs. Very few Englishmen then knew the situation in France. And there were not in 1905 in Great Britain six publicists who had taken the trouble to study the Russian language and literature, who were able to read Russian newspapers, and who were able to investigate the situation at first hand. And therefore it happened in 1905 that, just as in 1792, sympathy speedily evaporated, and was followed by an equally unjustifiable outburst of hatred and contempt when these poor misguided "Tartars and barbarians" proved themselves unworthy of and unprepared for liberty, and happened to deceive the expectations of an enthusiastic world.

Few readers will be inclined to deny that the resemblances just indicated are most striking and most unexpected. And yet we have not altered the facts, we have not strained them,

we have not even arranged them. Compared with its predecessor, the Russian Revolution of 1905 seems like one of those French plays which a resourceful stage manager adapts to the Russian stage. The names and places, the dresses and local colouring are alone changed. The characters are identical, and the plot is hurrying through the same thrilling episodes to the same *dénouement*. It seems as if we might accuse the Muse of History of plagiarizing herself, as if Fate had exhausted her possibilities, or as if she wanted to teach us the great moral lesson that mankind, untaught by the sufferings and the catastrophes of previous generations, shall be ever doomed to repeat the same blunders and the same crimes.

II. The Differences

Would it then be true that the Slav people, so powerful in their literature and in their imaginative art, so original in their temperament, as soon as they apply themselves to political action are only capable of fitful impulses, and unable to strike out a path of their own? Would it be true that 180,000,000 of Russia people are only to be like puppets in the hands of a few thousand bureaucrats or a few hundred agita-

tors, who pull the wires, think out the plot and apportion the parts? And will the Russian people be doomed in a national emergency to borrow once more their reforms, their institutions, their whole machinery from their Western neighbours?

To this we might reply in the first place that the analogies we have noticed may be easily explained by the fact that the two nations possessed the same political organization—a combination of autocracy and centralized bureaucracy, that both nations have been largely agricultural, and that the intellectual classes have been imbued by the same principles. They may, perhaps, be further explained by some resemblances between the Slav temperament and the Celtic temperament, a certain impulsivness, an absence of self-control, and a predominance of the emotional qualities.

In the second place we might reply that, striking though the analogies may appear, they are not fundamental, and do not justify us in drawing out any inferences for the future. So far, in Russia we have only seen the preliminary, the destructive period. Now, destruction is the same in all times and in all places. A building is pulled down very much in the

same way in every country. Blasting and blowing up are universal processes, dynamite is cosmopolitan; it is only when a building rises above ground that the characteristics of national architecture begin to appear.

And, therefore, it is only when we begin to think of the possibilities of a constructive revolution in Russia that differences arise which are far more important than any analogies and which must entirely change our forecast of events.

(*a*) The Russian autocracy have not lost their prestige in the eyes of the peasantry. Whilst in France the peasants, oppressed and exploited by the Crown and the Church and the absentee landlords, joined the ranks of the revolutionists in almost every province except Brittany and the Vendée, in Russia the peasantry seem to have remained loyal to the existing *régime*. Now, if this fact be true, it is decisive—for the peasantry still form 85 per cent. of the population, and whatever preliminary success might be achieved by the revolutionists, the ultimate success would depend on the support of the *moujik*.

I have just stated that the peasantry *seem* to be loyal, for it is almost impossible to know the

facts with absolute certainty: in the first place, because the peasants have not the same means of expressing their feelings as the intellectual classes; in the second place, because for any information we possess we almost exclusively depend on the revolutionists themselves who control the European Press, and with whom the wish is father both to the thought and to the deed. We, therefore, can only judge from inference and arrive at probabilities.

But in support of the *probable* loyalty of the *moujik* I would submit the following important considerations:

(1) Loyalty has been for generations a religious tradition, and almost an instinct with the Russian peasantry, and such instincts have a very tough life in them, especially in a slow, patient, passive being like the *moujik*. After the disaster to the Russian fleet in 1905, I visited many villages in every part of the Empire. The image of the Tsar was still hanging in every *izba* with the icons of the saints. The peasants remember the broad fact that Tsardom has ever been on their side, and that whilst they owe their servitude and the *krie-postnoe pravo* to the aristocracy, they are indebted for their freedom to the Tsar liberator

(*osvoboditel*). There exists a popular proverb: *do Boga visoko, do Tsaria dalioko!* God is too high: The Tsar is too far! This proverb indicates the deep-seated belief of the peasant that if it were only possible to let the Tsar know his wishes and his wants relief would be soon at hand.

(2) The peasantry do not want a central Parliament, they are not susceptible to political metaphysics nor to "immortal principles" which would carry the French off their feet. If they have any desire for political liberty, it only extends to the management of their own affairs in their village communities and in the County Councils or Zemstvos, a measure of political liberty which, however imperfect, they already possess. But what the peasant wants above all is more land; he is clamouring for a drastic agrarian reform. Let the Tsar initiate such a reform, let him satisfy that craving, that hunger, let him offer his people a comprehensive scheme of land reform, and the peasant would rather receive his additional plot of land at the hands of the Tsar than at the hands of the aristocracy, whom he suspects, or of the "intellectuals," whose language he does not understand, or of the Jews, whom he abhors.

(3) So far, the peasants have given no unmistakable indication that their loyalty is shaken. No doubt the war has left a very deep impression, and I have myself witnessed in many parts of Russia heartrending scenes. In 1905 I saw thousands of families bidding farewell to young soldiers leaving for the Far East. But these disasters in the Far East have not been brought home to the Tsar himself. Such sporadic outbursts of discontent as have occurred in the army can be traced to the work of agitators, and have only affected those soldiers who have been bred or who have lived in large towns, and who therefore were already disloyal. Such agrarian riots as have taken place can be explained by the prevailing anarchy and by the temporary withdrawing of the strong hand of government. Such popular insurrections and wholesale massacres as have occurred have been directed not against the representatives of government, but against the Jews suspected of fomenting the revolution. I do not wish to enter into the very complicated question of settling the responsibility of these massacres; but the very fact of the accusation that the "black hundreds," the "tchornia sotnia," alone are made responsible, and that they have been able to

organize massacres against hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of Jews—that fact is sufficient to prove how easy it would be to turn the popular passions against the revolutionists. Indeed, if the revolutionary spirit were spreading, and if famine were to be the result of anarchy, nothing would be easier than to make the peasants believe that it is the Jews and the landowners who are responsible for the evil, and that it is they who interfered with the good intentions of the Tsar: in which case there would not be one peasant insurrection like the Vendée, but twenty sporadic outbursts all over the Empire.*

(*b*) In 1789, the French Church—with its Court Abbés, with its Rohans and its Talleyrands—was utterly discredited. In Russia the Church seems to have retained its hold over the peasantry. The Russian people are, as I have shown, the most religious nation in the world, as one would expect from people on whom life has always pressed hard, and who must seek in their beliefs an opiate against their sufferings. Even irreligion in Russia retains all the earnest-

* This forecast has been only too fully verified in the epidemic of pogroms which are a blot on the Russian name and which continues unabated during the present war.

ness, all the single-hearted devotion, all the mysticism, of a belief in the supernatural. Significantly enough, amongst the four classic novelists, three—Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy—have ultimately been converted from scepticism and atheism to Christianity, and the fourth—Turgenev—only continued to adhere to positivism because he continued to live an exile in Germany and France. The only great philosophical thinker Russia has produced—Vladimir Soloviov—may be properly called a Christian Plato, and it is equally significant that the revolutionary leader who hitherto has had the strongest influence over the masses has been a priest. I am therefore not inclined to admit with the extreme Radicals, that the Church has ceased to be a national force. I have had myself opportunities of observing tens of thousands of Russian pilgrims at Jerusalem and at the great national shrines of Kieff and of Moscow, and in no other country have I met with such simple, pathetic, unwavering faith.

The loyalty to the Church is all the more amazing because the Church, as a body, has done little to deserve it. From my own observation in many Slav countries, in Bulgaria, in Serbia, as well as in Russia, the Orthodox

Church is at present in a more degraded state than any other Christian Church. The hierarchy are ignorant, contemplative monks. The secular priesthood form a miserable caste, almost as uneducated as the peasants whom they are supposed to guide and to enlighten. All through the nineteenth century the intellectuals, with the exception of a few writers of the Slavophile group, have been on the side of the opposition, as I pointed out before. The Russian Church has not produced one theologian, one writer, one statesman.

But when we consider that the Church, notwithstanding her present degradation, has nevertheless not forfeited the confidence of the peasantry, it seems all the more reasonable to infer that her influence would be tremendous if she were to awaken from her present lethargy, if there were a revival of spiritual energy. And it seems equally reasonable to anticipate that such influence would be exerted on the side of the Government.

The Church might, no doubt, have a liberalizing tendency, she might insist on the carrying out of a programme of reform, she might act the part of umpire and peacemaker—*but her influence would be on the whole a conservative*

one—as she herself would have to dread as much as the Government from the party of revolution.

I am convinced that the revolution is strong only because the Church is weak, and that the Church is weak only because she has been degraded into a Government department. Let the Government realize that there must be an independent constructive spiritual power to keep in check the destructive intellectual forces. Let the Government realize that it is its own interest to emancipate that spiritual power—and it seems probable that a regenerative Russian Church will rally round the Government and use all her increased influence to secure the loyalty of the people.

(*c*) The French Revolution, like the English Revolution, was essentially a middle-class revolution. Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat? *Rien.* Que doit-il être? *Tout.* Without a strong middle class, there can be no public opinion, and without the constant and jealous control of public opinion, there can be no successful liberal *régime.*

Now in Russia, no such middle class as yet exists. Russia is still an undifferentiated peasant State—without either *bourgeoisie* or aris-

tocracy. Trade and industry are largely in the hands of Jews and foreigners, Germans, Belgians, and Armenians. The only educated class are the bureaucracy, and that fact partly explains why the bureaucracy, notwithstanding its corruption, continues to possess such powers. And it will retain such power as long as there is no other educated class to take its place.

So far, the revolution has been mainly an intellectual movement. It has proceeded not from the Third Estate, but from what Carlyle has called the "Fourth Estate." The revolution is really managed by a mere band of intellectuals, journalists, professors, advocates, and students. It depends for its moral support on public opinion in Europe, and for its material support on the army of industrial labourers in the large cities. Nothing is more interesting to the foreigner than to observe the extraordinary power wielded by these few thousands of "intellectuals" and young students, and nothing is more significant to an Englishman than the fact that whilst in Great Britain the universities are wholly conservative, in Russia they are wholly revolutionary.

(*d*) The French Revolution was a *national* movement. The Russian Revolution, besides

being an intellectual movement, is also a *nationalist* movement. In other words the French nation, although distracted by civil dissensions, was a homogeneous unit, and it is this unity which made the revolution invincible. So much was this homogeneity the characteristic of France that it was one of the chief accusations against the Girondists that they were "federalists." The revolutionary wars were made in the name of the "Republic one and indivisible."

Russia, on the contrary, is a huge heterogeneous mass, composed of irreconcilable elements. The centrifugal forces in a revolutionary crisis must always be stronger than the centripetal. *And the aim of the Russian Revolution is not like the aim of the French, "La République une et indivisible," but the division and dissolution of the Empire.* The different nationalist elements may combine for that end—nationl separation—an end perfectly legitimate from their point of view—but their interests and tendency are different, nay, contradictory. Once separation granted, there is great danger that the Catholic Pole may turn against the Polish Jew, the Tatar against the Armenian.

(*e*) The *conjunction* of events in 1789 and

in 1906 is fundamentally different. It is this conjunction which made the movement in France so irresistible. Even at the eleventh hour the revolution in France might have been avoided. What made it inevitable was not any pre-existing "logic of events," but a combination of untoward circumstances: the religious war and the schism stirred up by a non-juring clergy, the class war stirred up by the aristocracy, the European war stirred up by the *émigrés*. Had there been neither religious schism, nor class war, nor European intervention—it is highly probable that a Reign of Terror would never have set in. Once this "conjunction" of events took place, terror was unavoidable, and what is even more important, as Taine himself, the most penetrating critic of the French Revolution, is compelled to admit, France could only be *saved* by a Reign of Terror.

Now, in Russia, the situation, the "conjunction" of events, is absolutely different.

In the first place there can be no religious schism, and therefore no religious war, which in France involved a life-and-death struggle, a war waged with all the fanaticism and horror of a crusade. In Russia the Church is a State

department, not as in France, a state within the State: *imperium in imperio*. No religious passions will be stirred, for the hatred against the Jew is economic and racial, not religious.

In the second place, there can be no class war, for the simple reason that in Russia the aristocracy as a class has ceased to exist. A few noble families who have given up the principle of primogeniture, three hundred princes Obolenski, four hundred princes Troubetzkoy, five hundred princes Galitzin, most of whom are poor and have lost their landed property, do not form an Estate of the Empire.

And finally, there cannot be in Russia any foreign intervention. No doubt the Russian Revolution has its *émigrés*, its exiles, mostly journalists and Jews or Poles, who are stirring up European opinion against the Russian Government. But Europe will interfere neither for nor against the revolution. British statesmen may have expressed in 1905 their Platonic sympathies for the dissolved Duma. English newspapers may collect subscriptions or send the "moral" support of the British intellectuals to their brethren in Russia. But no democratic Burke will arise to preach the crusade of nations against kings, as Burke once arose to preach the

crusade of kings against nations. The day of Holy Alliances has gone. The day of the solidarity and fraternity of nations is only just dawning. Russia, unlike France, must be left to work out her own doom or her own salvation.

III

THERE now only remains for us to sum up the chief conclusions to be drawn from a comparison between the situation in France in 1789 and the situation in Russia to-day. Not that I entertain much hope that those chiefly interested will give much heed to those lessons of history. Alas! in times of revolution, men are driven on by their prejudices and their passions, they are seldom guided by the light of reason or the teachings of experience. But this fact does not make it the less imperative for any one wielding a pen in Russia or elsewhere to proclaim such lessons, and to point out the only way to political and social salvation.

(1) The first and the most important lesson is this: the situations in the two cases are so fundamentally different, that no considerations as to the *inevitableness* of the one revolution permits us to draw an inference as to the inevitable-

ness of the other. Even if it were assumed that the forces let loose by the French Revolution were beyond human control, the same could not be asserted of the Russian Revolution. The revolutionary forces are, no doubt, strong, but the Conservative forces are also formidable. It is not true that the less resistance is offered to the energies of destruction, the less bloody the revolution will be. It is not true that it is too late to prevent a catastrophe. No doubt it is so much easier to surrender one's will to the so-called "logic of events," to let the storm rage and pass, to "emigrate" like the French aristocracy, and to fly before danger, and if the catastrophe does break out, to make one man or one class the scapegoat of the national sins. But what we call *fatality* in such cases is nothing but the fatality of our own folly and of our own cowardice.

What made the Reign of Terror inevitable in France was not any mysterious "logic of events," but the criminal interference of European Governments, who assumed that the prostrate and bankrupt condition of France, distracted by a religious war and a civil war, gave them a splendid opportunity of invading the country and dictating their own terms. Russia

has nothing to dread from her neighbours. So far the revolutionary movement has been nothing but a deliberate attempt on the part of a small minority to overturn the existing form of government, and to impose their own reforms by their own methods. But in that political duel, both parties retain the complete control and the full responsibility of events. If to-morrow the opposition chose to give up their systematic opposition to all government proposals, and if, on the other hand, the government gave unmistakable proofs that they are resolved to carry out a far-reaching programme of political and social reform—the present anarchy would cease at once, and a constructive revolution would at once be possible.

It is only if both the opposition and the government prove unequal to the great crisis, if they both refuse to come to terms—then, but only then, the fatal logic of events will begin to unfold its consequences: but fatality will not have been in the events themselves, but in the weakness and stupidity of a government incapable of steering the country through the tempest, and in the folly of an opposition which sacrificed the welfare of their country to their meta-

physical theories, and to their personal feelings of hatred and revenge.

(2) The second conclusion which forces itself upon us is, that Russia cannot be saved mainly by a centralized parliament superimposed upon a centralized bureaucracy. If a centralized parliamentary *régime* without any root or support in local self-government was premature in France and doomed to failure, how much more certain must such failure be in Russia! Russia does not possess as yet, though she may acquire in future, one of the essential conditions which make a parliamentary government of the approved British pattern possible. She has no independent aristocracy rooted in the soil, no independent Church, no middle class, no independent judicature. There is no united nation behind the parliament, there is no organized body of public opinion to check and control it, there are no free institutions to support it. It hangs in the air. No eloquent speeches can alter that fundamental fact.

(3) If there is one other lesson which the French Revolution teaches with irresistible persuasiveness, it is this: that a country confronted

with the tremendous tasks of economic, political, social, and religious reorganization, exhausted by a colossal foreign war, and threatened by a no less ominous civil war, *can only be saved by a strong government and a liberal despotism.* No doubt, the tasks before Russia are very different from those which France had to solve, but they are even more Titanic. A sweeping measure of agrarian reform, and perhaps of land-nationalization, the regeneration of the peasantry, the regeneration of the Church, the establishment of decentralization and of local government, the granting of autonomy to Poland, the solution of the racial problems—and especially of the Jewish problem and of the Armenian problem—these are some of the tasks before the Russian Government of to-morrow. No government but one invested with plenary powers could ever attempt to grapple with such Herculean labours.

(4) Such a strong government could not be formed, as in France, with purely revolutionary elements. Even a Reign of Terror could not evolve it, and the above-quoted dictum of Joseph de Maistre does not apply to Russia. The materials of a strong government do not exist in the revolutionary party, nor the possi-

bility of a strong policy, as the several sections of the party are divided, not on questions of principle, which might be compromised, but on differences of race and nationality, which will ever be conflicting. Unity of action seems impossible on any constructive programme. No single section of the revolutionary party could secure the support of the others, nor would it have sufficient power to absorb or control them.

(5) A strong administration can therefore be only established if all the moderate and liberal elements of the people loyally rally round the present government and if that government boldly initiates and consistently pursues a comprehensive programme of constructive reform. It is absurd to object that Tsardom and Bureaucracy once they had regained their strength would at once abuse it and would again start on a course of reaction. The recent history of Russia abundantly shows that such liberal despotism is possible in Russia. Forty years ago, Alexander II successfully carried through a succession of political, economic, and social reforms, the most gigantic perhaps that have ever been accomplished by one man. *Is faciet cui prodest.* Even if it had the power, autocracy henceforth has no interest to revert to its

old ways. Neither the Tsar nor his advisers would again place themselves willingly in their unenviable position of 1905. The days of reaction are past, provided the Liberals play their cards well. The danger seems to me henceforth to lie almost as much in the direction of anarchy as in the direction of reaction. Autocracy would only try a return to the past, if all other issues were closed. But in that case, it would probably be the opposition by their uncompromising, purely negative, and destructive policy that would make the *Terreur blanche* a necessity and a liberal despotism an impossibility. It seems to me, therefore, that the obvious duty of every Liberal in Russia at the present critical juncture, and the only chance for a Liberal solution, lies in a loyal adhesion to, and co-operation with, the government. If neither the autocracy nor the opposition rose to a sense of the urgency of the danger, and to the immensity of the task to be accomplished, there then would only remain one alternative and one certainty: the infernal circles of anarchy and of red terrorism: *facilis descensus Averni! Di hoc omen avertant.*

CHAPTER XVII

RUSSIAN POLITICAL EVILS AND THEIR REMEDIES

FANATICS, extremists, political metaphysicians and doctrinaires of all sects may try to obscure the Russian issues. But the issues are perfectly clear, and the principles themselves are amazingly simple, although their patient and consistent practice may tax all the resources of statesmanship. Both the evils from which the Russian body politic has suffered in the past, and the remedies which will cure the evils are equally obvious to a dispassionate student of politics.

The evil is a false philosophy of Imperialism. The remedy is the new political philosophy of federation.

The evil is a tortuous Russian statecraft based on intrigue and dissension, a policy inherited from Frederick the Great. The remedy is a wise and straightforward statesmanship.

The evil is a mystical belief in an unnatural political unity, in an artificial uniformity. The remedy is the recognition of the complex va-

riety of national characteristics, of the rich diversity of history.

The evil is a Byzantine immobility, a dread of all fresh revelations of life. The remedy is a belief in movement, in political experiment, even though the experiment may be attended with risk.

The evil is a belief in State interference, in the magic of regulations, in paternalism and protection. The remedy is a belief in individual initiative and in individual responsibility.

The evil is a monstrous centralization imposed upon a heterogeneous conglomerate of one hundred and eighty million human beings. The remedy is systematic decentralization and Home Rule.

The evil is the inevitable corruption of an arbitrary bureaucracy. The remedy is the publicity of the Press denouncing abuses wherever they occur.

The evil is an exclusive nationalism disguised under the name of patriotism. The remedy is equal rights to all nationalities.

The evil is race fanaticism and race antagonism. The remedy is race co-operation and race harmony.

The evil is a narrow and shallow policy of obscurantism, sinning against the Holy Spirit.

The evil is the keeping of the people in ignorance. The remedy is the spread of popular education, the diffusion of sweetness and light.

But greatest of all political evils in the Russian Empire has been the insensate dream of religious unity, imposed by authority, the pagan confusion of spiritual and temporal power. The remedy is the separation of Church and State, equal rights to all the Churches, the releasing of the tremendous spiritual forces latent in the Russian people.

The Slavophiles are ever opposing their three mystical and equivocal watchwords: "Samoderjavie," "Pravoslavie," "Narodnost," autocracy, orthodoxy, nationality—to the three revolutionary watchwords, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." No doubt it is quite possible to see in the Slavophile doctrine a healthy reaction against a blind imitation of the West, it is quite possible to read a deeper meaning into the Slavophile Trinity, just as it is quite possible to read a perverted meaning into the French Trinity.

The Slavophile principle of "Samoderjavie," or Autocracy, may only stand for the necessity

of a strong executive counteracting the centrifugal forces and the disintegrating elements of the Russian Empire. It may only express a belief in the value of the Monarchy, as a visible sign of political unity.

"Pravoslavie," or Orthodoxy, may only stand for the significance of a national Church in the life of the people. It may only mean the recognition of the importance of spiritual unity as the foundation of political unity.

"Narodnost," or Nationality, may only stand for the recognition of the democratic principle, for loyalty to a national ideal. It may only express a healthy distrust of the many alien races within the Russian Empire.

But although the Slavophile doctrines are capable of a liberal and democratic interpretation, and have actually received a liberal interpretation from noble spirits like Samarine, Aksakov, and Dostoevsky, such certainly has not been the interpretation which they have received from those pillars of reaction, Katkov and Pobiedonostsev. In recent Russian history, Slavophilism has only been too often a creed of hatred and intolerance, the creed of the Soiouz Ruskago Naroda, "of that infamous League of the Russian people," the oppressors

of the Poles, the butchers of the Jews, the persecutors of the Uniats.

Through the influence of reactionaries it has come about that the theory of "*Samoderjavie*" has been perverted into a Byzantine despotism. The theory of "*Pravoslavie*," the principle of a *National* Church which, as the case of Ireland proves, may be the very reverse of a *State* Church, has been perverted into the dogma of Cæsaro-papism. The democratic principle of "*Narodnost*" has been perverted into the claim of the stronger nationality to crush the weaker.

Slavophiles would make us believe that Slavism expresses the pure undiluted Russian spirit. Unfortunately the Slavism of Katkov is often undistinguishable from Pan-Slavism, and Pan-Slavism is but the twin brother to Pan-Germanism. Slavophiles are never tired of extolling their principles as rooted in national tradition. Let them beware lest those so-called traditional principles only represent the traditions of a German bureaucracy and of a Potsdam monarchy: and, unfortunately, it is only too true that those traditions have prevailed at St. Petersburg for two hundred years. At the beginning of the war the German name of Petersburg was changed into the Russian name

of Petrograd. But, alas! it was not only the name of the capital which had been German. The Russian Government itself was controlled by hyphenated Teutonized Russians, by the German Barons of the Baltic Provinces. Even the Russian Foreign Policy was directed from the Wilhelmstrasse and the politicians who oppressed the Slav brethren of Poland joined hands with the Prussian Hakatists who oppressed the Slav brethren of Posen. The All-Powerful Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg was a duplicate of the Berlin Academy, and refused to open its doors even to a Mendelieff. The intellectuals of the universities were inoculated with the poison of German economic and political materialism. Bazarov, the Father of Nihilism in Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons," was a disciple of Büchner and Haeckel.

A hundred years ago, Alexander I, the most liberal ruler of Russian history, was the pupil of Laharpe, himself a disciple of the French Revolutionists, and all through his reign Alexander remained under the influence of French Liberalism. The Alliance of the French democracy with the Russian Monarchy is based on political sympathies and elective affinities.

However much the reactionaries of the Katkov School may distrust the principles of 1789, it is under the French banner, it is in the name of the immortal principles of 1789, which were also the guiding principles of the American Revolution, that civilization is taking up arms against Prussianism and Pan-Germanism. After the war those principles adapted to Russian conditions will triumph in the internal policy of the Russian Empire as they are guiding its foreign policy. It would indeed be the most tragic paradox of all human history if millions of Russian patriots had laid down their lives to conquer freedom for their Slav brethren only to be themselves denied freedom at home, and if the Russian Government were fighting for the liberty of the Balkan nationalities only to repress the legitimate aspirations of the nationalities gathered under the Russian flag.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RUSSIAN WAR OF LIBERATION A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, AND TOLSTOY'S "WAR AND PEACE"

I

IT is now exactly a hundred years since Napoleon crossed the Niemen and declared war to his former friend and ally, Alexander I. Like the passing of the Rubicon by Cæsar, the crossing of the Niemen marks a turning-point in human history. Everything in the Russian campaign is stupendous, and staggers our imagination. The numbers engaged are on a scale hitherto unexampled in military annals. The most moderate computation exceeds half a million. Nor is the composition of the "Grand Army" less extraordinary than its numbers. It is too often forgotten that in the Russian campaign the French were in a minority. Half the nations of the Continent had sent their contingents to the Lord of the World. Danes, Spaniards, Austrians, Poles, had all

been coaxed or driven into the service of the Corsican, and were to adorn the supreme triumph of Napoleon's career.

And from beginning to end the Russian Campaign is a succession of dramatic contrasts and of tragic incidents. The conflict between the civilized Frenchman and the semi-barbarous Muscovite, the novel theatre of the war, the vast Russian plain alluring and devouring the invader, the guerilla tactics of the Cossacks, the ghastly shambles of Borodino, followed by the victorious entry into Moscow, the burning of the capital in the very hour of victory, the gradual approach of the Arctic winter, the hurried retreat, the infinite expanse covered with snow as with a winding sheet, the heroism of Murat and Ney, recalling the Homeric age, the disaster of the Berezina, the secret flight of Napoleon in the dead of night, and, as the last phase, a few straggling and famished hordes returning to the Polish frontier, a remnant of what had been, six months before, a formidable host—all those scenes and incidents are written in indelible characters in the annals of human folly and human suffering, and make the campaign of Russia one of the most impressive catastrophes of all times.

II

It is this catastrophe which is the subject of Tolstoy's novel. Only a literary giant like Tolstoy could have done justice to so gigantic a theme, and it is through this unique combination of a wonderful subject with a wonderful genius that "War and Peace" takes rank as one of the supreme masterpieces of world literature.

"War and Peace" is one of the miracles of literary art, and, like every miracle, it necessarily evades us. We cannot explain how the miracle came into being. We can only contemplate the achievement. We can only admire and inadequately analyse the magic powers displayed: the creative imagination which breathes life into every scene and every character, and which, indeed, makes the fictitious characters stand out more vividly than the historical, the infallible observation and sense of reality which seizes on the most minute details, and which selects with infallible tact the most characteristic touches; the universal outlook which embraces every aspect and every class of society, which introduces us to the drawing-room of the society woman, to the closet of the statesman, and to the hut of the peasant; and,

above all, the divine gift of sympathy, which can feel with every suffering, which can read into every heart, into the soul of sinner and saint, of young and old, of the worldling and of the common people.

And as we can only inadequately analyse the powers displayed, so we can only dimly guess the methods employed. One of Tolstoy's favourite methods is the method of contrast, and that method is illustrated in the very title of the book. For we may observe that the title is not "The Great War." The title is "War *and Peace*." The author gives us the action and reaction of the one on the other. He does not give the military events separately. He gives us the battle scenes on the background of the domestic drama. He makes the pomp and circumstance of war alternate with the peaceful pursuits of everyday life. He shows us events, not merely from the vantage-ground of the battlefield, but from the more important point of view of those who are left at home. He tells us of the war as it affects the old prince on his remote estate, or as it impresses the wives and mothers whose dear ones are taken away from them. Whilst in one scene the hero is dying in the stillness of the starry night, in the next

scene the heroine is making love, and the little ironies and comedies of ordinary life only heighten the effect of the tragedy.

III

But "War and Peace" is not only an inspiring epic, the Iliad of the Russian people. It also contains an ethical message of weighty import. From his protracted absorption in his great theme, Tolstoy has emerged with a new conception of war and a new conception of life. Describing the military incidents of the campaign, he has come to close quarters with the horrors of modern warfare, with the wholesale and treacherous butchery of gun and grapeshot, which makes no difference between coward and hero. The once dashing young officer of the Crimea is transformed into an ardent anti-militarist. And thus the record of a great patriotic war indirectly becomes a plea in the favour of peace. Or, again, studying the high life of Petersburg and Moscow, Tolstoy cannot help contrasting the selfishness and frivolity of the upper classes with the quiet heroism and the resignation of the illiterate peasant. And thus, what appears at first sight as a description of Russian society life, becomes indirectly the

glorification of democracy. Or again, tracing the action between cause and effect, Tolstoi has observed how at every stage the individual will is overruled by a Higher Will; how in the battlefield the leader does not lead, but follows; how victory and defeat are equally at the mercy of forces beyond human control. And thus we see the gambler and Bohemian of earlier years transformed into a Russian Puritan and a Christian Nihilist.

But although the burning problems of modern life are presented to us in all their aspects, Tolstoy is too much of an artist to obtrude his own theories upon his audience. He lets life teach its own lessons, and he lets the reader draw his own moral. From the first page to the last he remains the objective creator; standing, as it were, outside and above his own creation, he retains his impartiality and his serenity. No doubt he writes with a purpose, but the purpose is hidden from us. The time will soon come in the life of Tolstoy when the story will be overweighted with the message, and when the story-teller will recede in the background and surrender to the leader and preacher. But until the "final conversion" he maintains that perfect equilibrium which is so rarely met with

in literature, that harmony between the creative artist and the thinker where neither encroaches on the province of the other, and where each remain supreme in his own sphere.

CHAPTER XIX

RUSSIA AND GERMANY

I

PEACE still seems far off. In the words of the King's message: "The end is not even in sight." We do not know when it will come or how it will come, but we do know that the settlement will largely depend on Russia. Russia is to-day for the Kaiser the most formidable enemy on land as she was the most formidable enemy for Napoleon. Russia can be invaded, but she cannot be conquered. She can be beaten, but no people possess greater recuperative power. The Russian Government have pledged themselves that they shall make no separate peace. There is no reason to believe that, if they can help it, they will break their pledge. But in a world conflagration unexpected catastrophes may always happen and it is the duty of a far-seeing statesman to bring even the unexpected into their calculations. A hundred years ago the

members of the European coalition repeatedly entered into a solemn engagement that they would make no separate peace. The engagement broke down under the stress of circumstances. It is at least conceivable that circumstances, say the pressure of a national disaster or an internal revolution, might again prove too strong even for the most resolute Government, and no Russian Government would dare refusé a separate peace if the vital necessities of the people demanded it. A few months ago the resistance of Russia was completely paralyzed for lack of ammunition. It might be paralyzed again. Her most prosperous provinces are ravaged. Grave internal difficulties are ever threatening her. And it is probably in response to popular demand that even so strong a generalissimo as Grand Duke Nicholas was removed from the supreme command. One can therefore imagine a combination of tragic circumstances where the Russian Government might be unable to resist the political, financial and military pressure, and might be reduced to accept an inconclusive peace. For Russia as well as for ourselves the danger of an inconclusive peace is by far the greatest peril which threatens us in the future. The Russian For-

eign Secretary recently made a disquieting announcement, that the Russian Government will make no independent peace as long as one single German soldier remains on Russian territory. But what if the last German soldier were to withdraw? Russia will certainly not make a dishonourable peace, but what if financial exhaustion and internal dissension, aided by German intrigue and a short-sighted and faint-hearted policy, compelled her to accept an honourable peace,—such a peace as Bismarck granted to Austria after Sadowa.

Let us be under no delusion; as the war is being protracted, as the economic and military pressure increases, as the decision is being delayed, there exists, at least, a remote danger of a breach in the European Alliance. I admit that the chances are very remote, *but Germany may be depended upon to make the most of those chances*, and to use all the influence she has got in Russia to compass her ends. It is, therefore, of the greatest practical interest to analyse the nature of the influence which Germany actually does wield in the Empire of the Tsar, the precise nature of the relations between Germany and Russia and the means Germany possesses of controlling the internal and

foreign policy of the country, and of eventually deflecting the currents of public opinion.

II

THE complicated and contradictory relations between the two countries can be summed up very briefly. On the one hand, there existed before the war the closest intercourse between the Russian and the German courts, and that close intercourse extended to the army, to the bureaucracy, to the universities, to the industrial and commercial classes. On the other hand, the Russian and the German people are mutually repellent. There is a temperamental antagonism between the two nations, between the dour disciplined Prussian and the easy-going, undisciplined Russian. In the province of ideas, of art and literature, French influence is dominant amongst the intellectual and in the upper classes, but as literature counts for very little, and as trade and industry, the bureaucracy and the court count for a very great deal, and as all these social and political forces hitherto were almost entirely controlled by the Germans, it may be said that before the war German influence was supreme in the Russian Empire.

III

UNTIL Peter the Great, the Romanov family was a national dynasty. It had remained national from sheer necessity, as no European court would have cared to intermarry with Tartar and Barbarian princes. Even at the end of Peter the Great's reign, the prestige of Russia had scarcely asserted itself in the politics of the West. Peter the Great expressed a keen desire to pay a visit to the court of Louis XIV. He was politely given to understand that his visit would not be acceptable, even as a poor relation will be told that his visit is not welcome to a kinsman in exalted position. After the death of Louis, the Tsar again asked to be received at Versailles. This time his overtures were accepted, but even at the court of the Regent his visit caused the greatest embarrassment to the masters of ceremonies. The situation was a tragic-comic one. French etiquette could not decide whether the Tartar Prince was to receive the honours which belong of right only to the ruler of a civilized people.

For the first time in modern Russian history, Peter the Great's daughter, Anne, married a German prince in 1725. With that year be-

gins that close dynastic alliance with the German courts which has lasted until our own day. Germany has been carrying on a most thriving export trade of Princes and Princesses with almost every European monarchy, an export trade of which she is reaping enormous political advantage in the present crisis. But in Russia alone she has obtained a monopoly of this royal export trade. *All the Russian Tsars have married German Princesses.* For one hundred and fifty years the rule suffered no exception until Alexander II married a daughter of the Danish dynasty, which itself is really the German dynasty of Oldenburg.

I need not emphasise the supreme importance of those close family relations between the Courts of Russia and Germany, *and especially between the Courts of Russia and Prussia.* It is the peculiarity of an autocratic Government that the smallest causes are productive of the greatest consequences and amongst those smaller causes none are likely to produce more far reaching results than the personal likes and dislikes of the ruler and his family. In the Empire of the Tsars the sympathies of the ruler and of the Imperial family for a hundred and fifty years have generally been German. Women have no

less influence in Russia than in other countries, and as every Russian Princess has, for a hundred and fifty years, been German in origin, German by training, German by pride of birth, German by prejudice, the Teutonic influences have necessarily been supreme in the Russian Court. Nor must we forget that every German Princess coming to Petrograd would bring with her a numerous suite of ladies-in-waiting and court officials, so that the German Court colony was automatically increasing. Indeed it is no mere chance that the capital, the military harbour and the chief imperial residences should all have German names—Kronstadt Oranienbaum, Schlussenburg, Petersburg and Peterhof. Peterhof has been the Russian Potsdam. Petersburg has been the outpost of Germany in the Russian Empire, the "feste Burg" of Prussia until the eve of the war.

IV

From what has been said, it is obvious that the national Romanov dynasty, founded in 1613 by Michael Romanov, patriarch of all the Russias, ceased to be a Romanov dynasty at the death of Empress Elizabeth in 1761. With Peter III, it is a German dynasty which ascends

the throne. Peter III, son of a duke of Holstein-Gottorp, is a Romanov in the proportion of one-half; Paul, son of a Princess of Anhalt-Zerlst, in the proportion of one-fourth; Alexander I and Nicholas I, sons of a Princess of Württemberg, in the proportion of one-eighth; Alexander II, son of a Princess of Hohenzollern, to the extent of one-sixteenth; Alexander III, son of a Grand-Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt, to the extent of one thirty-second, and the present ruler, Nicholas II, who married a Princess of the House of Oldenburg, to the extent of one sixty-fourth. One sixty-fourth of the blood of the present Tsar is Russian Romanov blood. In the proportion of sixty-three sixty-fourths $\left(\frac{63}{64}\right)$ it is the blood of Holstein, of Anhalt, of Oldenburg, of Hesse, of Württemberg, of Hohenzollern which flows through the veins of the Emperor of all the Russias.

V

The history of Russia proves only too conclusively that again and again her national interests have been sacrificed to the German dynastic influences. At the end of the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great was at his last

gasp. Prussia was on the verge of ruin. *The Russian army had entered Berlin;* the power of the new military monarchy had been totally broken at Kunersdorf. The death of Elizabeth and the accession of her mad nephew, Peter III, retrieved a desperate situation. For the mad nephew was a German Prince, a Duke of Holstein and a passionate admirer of Frederick the Great. Peter III was murdered in 1762. He reigned only a few months, but he reigned sufficiently long to save Prussia from destruction and to surrender all the advantages secured by Russian triumphs and dearly paid for by Russian blood.

VI

THERE is no more fantastic fairy tale and there is no more arresting drama than the life story of Catherine the Great which recently has been so brilliantly told by Mr. Francis Gribble. A Cinderella amongst German royalties, a pauper princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, Catherine became the mightiest potentate of her age. Although the nominee of Frederick the Great, she pursued consistently a national Russian policy. And she had good reasons for doing so. For no throne was less secure than the throne of the

Romanovs. She had had to remove her husband by murder for fear of being removed herself. She continued to be surrounded by a rabble of unscrupulous adventurers and intriguers. Her only safety lay in becoming a patriotic Russian, and in seeking the support of Russian sentiment and Russian opinion. Whilst Frederick the Great surrounded himself with French advisers and contemptuously refused even to speak the German language, whilst he declared to the German scholar who presented him with a copy of the "Nibelungen Lied" that this national German epic was not worth a pipe of tobacco, Catherine the Great systematically encouraged Russian literature. Whilst Frederick the Great remained the consistent atheist on the throne, Catherine the Great professed the utmost zeal for Russian orthodoxy. All through her reign she avoided as far as possible a conflict with Frederick and his successor. She divided with them the spoils of Poland, or as Frederick the Great put it in his edifying theological language, she partook of the eucharistic body of the Kingdom in unholy communion with Prussia and Austria. But Catherine saw to it that Russia secured the greater part of the spoils.

VII

THERE is a curious and uncanny similarity between the character and the reign of Peter III and the character and reign of his son, Paul I. Both reigns were brief, yet both reigns had an incalculable influence on European affairs. Both rulers sacrificed national interests to dynastic interests. Both rulers were insane and both engaged in insane enterprises. Both rulers were murdered with the complicity or connivance of their own family. The Russian armies on the advent of Peter III had secured and achieved a dramatic victory over Prussia, but the admiration of Peter III for Frederick the Great prevented Russia from reaping the fruits of victory. Suvorov crossed the Alps and achieved an equally sensational victory over France, but Paul I was prevented from taking advantage of his victories by his admiration for Napoleon.

VIII

THE reign of Alexander I once more strikingly illustrates the enormous part which subterranean German influences have played in the foreign policy of Russia. After the costly vic-

tories of Eylau, and Friedland, Napoleon I had concluded with Alexander I the Peace of Tilsit. The treaty was fatal to Europe, for it divided the Continent practically between the Russian and French Empires. But it was highly advantageous to Russia and enormously added to Russian power and Russian prestige.

It was certainly in Russia's interest to maintain the alliance. It was broken largely through one of those small dynastic incidents which are of such vast importance under an absolute despotism. One of Napoleon's main objects was to establish a Napoleonic dynasty and to be adopted by marriage into one of the ruling families of Europe. The Corsican parvenu passionately desired a matrimonial alliance with the House of Romanov, and repeatedly applied for the hand of one of Alexander's sisters. The dowager Tsarina, Alexander's mother, a daughter of the King of Württemberg, as persistently refused. She had all the pride of birth of a German Princess and all the hatred of a reactionary against the armed soldier of the Revolution. Foiled at the Court of Petersburg, Napoleon was more successful at the Court of Vienna. A few months after Napoleon's last overtures had been rejected by

Russia, the Hapsburgs, who, after the Bourbons, were the most august, the most ancient dynasty of Europe, eagerly accepted what the Romanovs had refused. The War of 1812 with Russia was the result of that pro-German policy of the Russian Court.

IX

DURING the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II the German-Austrian influence reached its zenith at the Court of Petersburg. Nicholas I was the brother-in-law of the Prussian Hohenzollern. An able and an honest man in his private relations, he was in his political capacity a Prussian martinet, as even Treitschke is compelled to admit, and he organized his empire on the strictest Frederician principles. The court, the army, and the bureaucracy were Prussianized as they had never been before. A German bureaucrat, Nesselrode, who could not even speak the Russian language, for forty years controlled, as foreign minister, the policy of the Russian Empire. Even as his grandfather, Peter III, even as his brother, Alexander I, had saved Prussia from destruction, so Nicholas I saved Austria from a similar fate. Francis Joseph had ascended a throne shaken to its

foundations. Hungary was in open rebellion. The young Austrian Emperor appealed to Russia for help. Nicholas I sent an army to quell the revolution and established his cousin on the Hungarian throne. It is unnecessary to add that Francis Joseph was as loyal and as grateful to Russia as Frederick the Great had been.

Alexander I had refused to accept Napoleon I as a brother-in-law. Even so did Nicholas I refuse to recognize Napoleon III as Emperor of the French. It was a gratuitous insult inspired by Prussia, it was opposed to Russian interests and it was one of the main causes of the Crimean War.

X

UNDER Alexander II the alliance of the three reactionary empires of Central Europe was welded even more firmly than under his predecessor. Bismarck during his tenure of the Prussian Embassy at Petersburg was the chosen favorite of the Russian Court. An understanding with Russia became the chief dogma of his political creed and it remained so until the end. It was Bismarck's adherence to the Russian-Prussian Alliance which was one of the causes of the dismissal.

Alexander II did nothing to guard against the German peril. He might have been the umpire of Central Europe as Alexander I had been fifty years before. He demanded no compensation for the enormous accession of power and territory which Germany had received through the victorious wars of 1863, 1866 and 1870. He insisted on no guarantees. When after Sedan, Thiers came to St. Petersburg to obtain the intervention of the Russian Empire, he was dismissed with empty words. One year after Thiers' fruitless journey, Emperor William paid an official visit to his nephew, Alexander II, and the Tsar once more proclaimed the indissoluble solidarity of Russia with Germany. Until the end of his reign the German-Austrian-Russian Alliance, the famous dynastic Alliance of the Three Emperors remained the keystone of European policy and the mainstay of Russian reaction.

XI

THE influence of Germany at the Russian Court was strengthened by the influence of Germany on the Russian bureaucracy. An agricultural community without a middle class, Russia has had to recruit her civil services almost entirely

from the outside, mainly from Germany and more especially from the German Baltic provinces of Esthonia, Livonia and Courland. Teutonic barons from those Baltic provinces have filled the higher ranks of the diplomatic service and of the civil service for a hundred and fifty years. The Russian Tsars found the German barons far more serviceable tools than the Russian boiars. In a previous age one Emperor after another had been removed by a rebellious aristocracy. The highest nobles in the land had been implicated in the Decabrist conspiracy at the end of Alexander I's reign. Even under Alexander II there were always a few members of the nobility to be found as accomplices in the revolutionary plots. But there never was one single German from the Baltic provinces implicated in a conspiracy against reaction. It is easy to understand, therefore, why a Russian autocrat should have preferred the services of the German Baltic barons. The Russian nobleman is casual, lavish, a bad economist, easy-going, generous, and he is corrupt because he is easy-going and generous. He is also much more independent. The Junker is punctual, precise, disciplined, generally poor always

ambitious. He is also tolerably honest. He is the ideal bureaucrat.

XII

GERMAN influence has been no less dominant in the Russian academies and in scientific institutions. The Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg was organized on the pattern of the Academy of Berlin. It was an official institution with high privileges and it remained consistently German. Until recently its proceedings were published in the German language and German scientists were invariably preferred rather than Russian scientists. Mendelieff, one of the most creative scientific minds of his generation, was a member of every European academy except the Academy of Petersburg.

The Germans have been an even greater power in the Russian universities. They took full advantage of the prestige which German science had acquired in Europe, and they largely filled the ranks of the Liberal professions. German doctors, German veterinary surgeons, German "Feldschers," German foresters, German engineers, were to be found in every part of the Empire. A casual reading of the post-office

directories of Moscow, or Petersburg, or Kiev, provides a most instructive commentary on the extent of the German domination.

XIII

SECURELY entrenched in the Russian Court, in the army, in the bureaucracy, in the universities, in the diplomatic service—the Germans secured a no less commanding influence in trade and industry. As we already pointed out, Russia until recent years had remained an agricultural country without a middle class. The trade remained almost entirely in foreign hands. Already in the Middle Ages, Russian cities, like Novgorod, were affiliated to the German Hanseatic League. In the sixteenth century adventurous English explorers and traders, whose exploits are amongst the most thrilling of "Hakluyt's Voyages," tried to oust their German competitors, but they utterly failed. The Russians themselves are excellent traders, and the merchant guilds of Moscow have been for centuries a powerful commercial organization. Even today you will meet in Moscow unassuming Russian merchants leading the simplest of lives and possessed of enormous wealth. But the Russian merchant is generally conservative, unen-

terprising, a bad linguist, and servilely attached to ancient usages. He is scarcely a match for the foreigner. In recent years British and Belgian traders as well as Jews and Armenians have shared in the enormous trade of the Russian Empire, *but the Germans have secured the lion's share.*

And what is true of Russian trade is equally true of Russian industry. The liberal economic policy of Witte has created in one generation powerful industrial centres in Central Russia, and especially in Poland. Here again the Germans have benefited more than all their competitors together. Lodz, the "Manchester of Russian Poland," has ceased to be either Polish or Russian, and has become a German manufacturing town. Caprivi, Bismarck's successor, negotiated with the Russian Government a treaty of commerce which gave enormous advantages to German industry and if the German Government had continued to show the wisdom of Bismarck and Caprivi, Germany would certainly have profited more than any other country by the commercial expansion of the Russian Empire.

XIV

It might have been expected that a German influence so absolutely supreme in every sphere of society, in every walk of life should have extended to the lower classes. But the common people were never affected by German methods and remained untainted by the German spirit. To the Russian *moujik*, the German remained the Niemets, the mute, the alien enemy. The Russian peasant, with his simple ways and his child-like faith, a mystic and an idealist, has an instinctive antipathy to the modern Prussian who is an implacable realist, selfish, calculating and aggressive. The persistence with which the Russian people have resisted and escaped Prussian influence is not the least convincing proof of the soundness of the Slav character.

XV

We have seen German influence supreme in the province of the practical, the tangible, the useful. It is all the more remarkable that it should be insignificant in the sphere of the ideal and of the beautiful. In art and literature the influence of Germany has been purely superficial although the beautiful Rus-

sian language has often been spoiled by the influence of a cumbrous German syntax. With the exception of Nietzsche, no German writer has left his mark on Russian literature. The literary influence of Great Britain has been much more extensive and has grown enormously during the last generation. But it is the literature of France which has been the dominant factor in the literary life of modern Russia. The fascination of French culture has been as old as Russian culture. Catherine II was the friend of Diderot and Voltaire and herself translated French masterpieces into Russian. The French language has been the language of diplomacy and society. Readers of "War and Peace" will remember how the noblemen of the Petersburg salons denounced the French usurper in the language of Voltaire.

XVI

We have sufficiently proved that Germany has been a formidable factor in the whole past history of the Russian Empire. We may hope that after the war German influence will be a thing of the past. After the war it is not German political ideas and German institutions, but French and British ideas and institutions which

will mould the destinies of the Russian Empire. The elective affinities between the Russian democracy and the French and British democracies will assert themselves and will eliminate the mischievous and reactionary influence of Germany.

We have seen how entirely German power has been artificial and imposed from above, how it has been the outcome of the dynastic connection. But in *the meantime the German influence, supreme before the war, still subsists and still constitutes a danger which it would be extremely unwise and unstatesmanlike to ignore or to under-rate.* We must therefore guard ourselves so that when the day of settlement comes the subtle and subterranean German forces shall not make themselves felt, and that the Teutonic monarchies shall be frustrated in their supreme effort to retain a power which has been so fatal to the liberties of Europe and to the free development of the Russian people.

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